MY UNCLE NETAJI

ASOKE NATH BOSE

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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DEDICATED
to the Hallowed Memory
of
My Parents
SARAT CHANDRA
and
BIVABATI BOSE

PREFACE

In June, 1970, I had the pleasure of a visit from the well-known German historian, Dr. Johannes M. Voigt, who was then engaged in research on India's role in World War II, and looking for relevant material on Netaji Subhas, specially on his career prior to his secret journey to Europe in the year 1941. It was a bit of a surprise to me to be told by Dr. Voigt that he had come across my name while gleaning, after the war, material from what remained of the archives of the Foreign Office of the pre-war German Government This was doubtless more a proof of thoroughness and efficiency of the then German Foreign Office and its Intelligence Service than of any notable activity on my part.

Not being a student of history with a flair for literary pursuits, I had not unfortunately taken sufficient pains until the year 1931 to preserve in proper order and sequence notes and memoranda on events of which I had reliable and even first-hand knowledge. Looking back to that period now, I wish, in particular, I had by some means contrived to preserve at least some of the messages scribbled by my uncle Subhas in his own hand and sent out by him from inside jails in 1930-31.

From 1932 onwards, however, I endeavoured to maintain a more systematic record of uncle's activities in my diaries, and preserved most of his important correspondence with me, and got together a fairly representative collection of press clippings and other publications, both Indian and foreign, on and about him. Many of such papers were requisitioned from me by uncle Subhas himself and most of them were lost in the storm and stress of his unimaginably hectic political life, and some of them were confiscated by the British Indian Police. Subsequently, some of the documents and photographs were donated by myself to organizations, associations, and individuals for making use of in their publications on Netaji. Whatever papers remained in my possession were placed before Dr. Voigt for his perusal and such use as he wished to make of them.

After a careful review of these papers, Dr. Voigt was of the opinion that the material at my disposal could well form the basis of reminiscences of uncle Subhas and, if properly presented, provide not only a glimpse of his activities, specially during the period from 1933 to 1941, but also shed interesting light on many a facet

of his remarkable career. Also, some other scholars of contemporary history and writers on political events, both Indian and foreign, who were shown the papers, insisted on my putting down the reminiscences in print so that these may provide a source material for a complete biography of Netaji, which is yet to be written

I was somewhat hesitant to undertake the task, having doubts as to my ability for authoring a work outside my professional competence, but on constant insistence and unusually warm encouragement of my friends, particularly Mr. Amiya Nath Sarkar and some others, I was finally persuaded to get over my initial diffidence Mr. Sarkar who was a contemporary of mine in Europe during the pre-war fateful years 1933-37 and was a co-participant with and co-witness to many important events was kind enough to check on the relevant portions of the narrative. One other young friend was not only instrumental in prevailing on me to write these lines, but was of conspicuous assistance in ways too numerous to mention

Furthermore, I have had the good fortune to receive the help of my aunt Emilie (nee Schenkl), who read and approved, with some very minor amendments, the chapter on uncle Subhas's stay in Europe, specially the portion covering the period from June, 1934, when she first met uncle, to the beginning of 1936, and that dealing with his brief visit to that continent again in 1937-38

I am also greatly obliged to Prof Binayendramohan Chaudhuri, retired Professor and Head of the department of Humanities, I.I.T , Kharagpur, a friend of uncle, and a fellow-detenu in the 'twenties, who took keen interest in the book, read the manuscript before it was sent to press, and helped me with valuable suggestions.

To all of them, I hereby express my sincere appreciation and gratitude.

Finally, I owe and hereby offer my humble apologies for the inordinate delay in publication of the book for reasons beyond my control and crave the indulgence of the generous readers for defects which may have been found in the book including a number of printing mistakes and omissions referred to in the errata

164, Regent Estate,
Calcutta-700 032.
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ASOKE NATH BOSE

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N B Pictures 1 and 2 by courtesy of Aunty Emilie, Picture 3 of Mr K C Ghosh and Pictures 2 and 4 of Mr A N Sarkar

CHAPTER ONE

1916-1920
Early Recollections

My earliest recollection of my uncle, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, dates back to the year 1916. It was, of course, a faint one as I was then a boy hardly five years old. He had, no doubt, come over to live in Calcutta with us in the year 1913 after successfully passing the Matriculation Examination from the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack, in order to continue his studies in the college. He had been in Calcutta till 1916, but I was much too young then to remember anything about that period. In 1916, I was on a short visit with my parents to our grand-parents at Cuttack, which was at the time the capital of Orissa. My grandfather, Janaki Nath Bose, had migrated from Kodalia, his native village in South Bengal, and settled down at Cuttack in the 'eighties of the last century as a lawyer and had in course of time built his own house there where most of his children including uncle Subhas were born and received their early education. My father, Sarat Chandra Bose, even started his profession as a lawyer in Cuttack.

Uncle (Netaji) was living in Cuttack at the time as his studies in the B.A. class had been interrupted owing to his rustication from the Presidency College, Calcutta, on account of the "Oaten incident".* I do not particularly remember any thing or event during my short stay in Cuttack except that I saw uncle occasionally practising riding and now and then working in the large garden attached to the house. Apart from horses for drawing his carriage—motor cars had not yet been introduced in our household at Cuttack or Calcutta—my grandfather kept a riding horse for his sons Although my father and uncle Subhas did not care much for games and sports, both were good riders.

Uncle came back to Calcutta in the year following, i.e., in 1917, to live with us. The head of the family in Calcutta was my father and we were then living in 38/2, Elgin Road (now known as Netaji Bhavan, 38/2, Lajpat Rai Sarani). The house was built by my grandfather in the year 1909. It was not a fine structure judged by modern standards, but provided generous accommodation for his large and growing family. By the year 1916, most of my uncles had completed their education and started earning and several of my paternal aunts had been married and left Cuttack.

My father, Sarat Chandra Bose, had after a few years' practice as Advocate in Cuttack, gone to England in the year 1912 He was called to the bar in 1914 in which year he returned home and started practice at the Calcutta High Court. His elder brother,

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*In February 1916, one of the English Professors of the College, Mr Oaten, manhandled a student of the first year class As this was not the first instance of the kind, some students decided to take the law into their own hands as a result of which Mr. Oaten was assaulted. Uncle who was considered among the ring-leaders was therefore rusticated from the College

Satish Chandra Bose, however, remained in Cuttack and continued his legal practice there. The brother next to my father, Suresh Chandra Bose, had, after graduation in Science, obtained nomination to the Provincial Civil Service in 1913 and been posted in Orissa. Among the other brothers, Sudhir Chandra Bose likewise a graduate in Science, had joined railway service in the absence of something better and been mostly out of Calcutta as well as Cuttack. The next brother, Sunil Chandra Bose, had already qualified as a graduate in medicine and started practice in Calcutta. Uncle Subhas came next. By the year 1917, all except three of my uncles viz., Satish Chandra and the youngest two, Sailesh Chandra and Santosh Chandra, had left Cuttack.

Uncle Subhas returned to Calcutta about the middle of the year 1917 and was able to obtain admission into the Scottish Church College in the third year B.A. class. In those days he used to take regular physical exercise, both freehand and with dumb-bells, and from time to time donned the military uniform of the University Training Corps of which he had in the meantime become a cadet, and went for drilling and camping. He passed the B.A. Examination with first class honours in Philosophy in 1919 and then started to read and prepare for the M.A. Examination.

Early in September, 1919, we, the children of the household, were very much surprised to see uncle Subhas one morning in European costume. It was indeed a surprise as we had never seen him in European dress before although we were accustomed to see my father and Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose and occasionally some of my other uncles wear European dress. At that time, the Western way of life had not been introduced into our family except to a very limited extent. Also,

we saw uncle being instructed by father in the English manners and customs, etiquette, etc. We came to learn in a couple of days that uncle would be going to England very shortly. My eldest uncle, Satish Chandra, had already gone there a few months earlier to qualify for the bar. Uncle Subhas sailed from Calcutta on the 15th September, 1919, by the British India Steam Navigation Company's steamer, *City of Calcutta*. Some of us, children, saw him off at the Kidderpore jetty. The boat reached London about the 25th October.

We learned subsequently that uncle had gone to England to study for the Indian Civil Service and also to obtain Tripos from Cambridge. Naturally, we, the children, could not be told of and did not know the circumstances of uncle's going abroad. This we learned much later when grown up.

By the year 1919, within five years of his enrolment at the Calcutta High Court as a barrister, father had already built up a decent practice and was not only able to run the household in Elgin Road on his own, but could even meet the entire expenses of uncle's passage to England and back, for his studies and living there. His success at the bar had been as rapid as it had been striking. My grandfather was at the time not in a position to afford the additional expenses of another son in England as he had already sent my eldest uncle, Satish Chandra, there and had to provide for him and his studies.

In the third week of September, 1920, a cable arrived from uncle informing us of his success in the I.C.S. Examination. I still remember that father was beside himself with joy, specially for uncle's singular feat in passing such an exceedingly stiff examination as the I C S after less than eight months' preparation

Of what happened as a sequel to his success at the I.C.S. examination viz, his long correspondence with father and other events culminating in his resignation from the I.C.S., we, the children of the family, naturally had no inkling. It was only shortly before his return home in the year following that we came to learn that uncle had resigned from the I C.S. and that on his return he would be participating in the non-violent non-cooperation movement under the leadership of the late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das* of hallowed memory. Years later—in 1933—in the course of intimate conversations I had with him in Vienna, he related to me about the adverse reaction and intense annoyance which his decision to resign from the I.C.S caused in the whole family. Only father's warm support of his resolve encouraged him greatly in taking the plunge.

* Hereafter to be referred to as Deshbandhu Das.

CHAPTER TWO

1921-1924
Non-Cooperation and After

Uncle resigned from the Indian Civil Service in May, 1921 and after obtaining his degree in Cambridge with tripos in Mental and Moral Science left England for India towards the end of June, 1921 He arrived in Bombay on the 10th July and had an interview with Mahatma Gandhi the same day. He reached Calcutta after a couple of days thereafter. Practically the whole of our family turned up at the Howrah station to receive him. Though my grandfather had emphatically disapproved of his resignation from the I.C.S., he nevertheless accepted with the utmost grace the decision made by uncle and not only received him with his customary warmth and affection, but extended to him his moral support in the great task undertaken by him. There was no equivocation in grandfather's support once he had accepted the position that uncle had turned his back for good on a most promising career and chosen a life which entailed stupendous sacrifice and limitless suffering.

Shortly after his arrival in Calcutta, uncle plunged himself headlong into the non-cooperation movement. His spectacular sacrifice for the country and rare organizing abilities brought him to the forefront in no time. Towards the end of the year, an announcement was made that the then Prince of Wales (later on King Edward VIII and still later known as Duke of Windsor after his abdication) would visit India, the motive behind the visit being in uncle's own words, "to assuage public feeling and rally public support for the Government" Thereupon, instructions were issued by the Congress to boycott the Prince's visit. As a first step towards the boycott, a *hartal* or what is nowadays designated as *bandh*, was called for the 17th November, 1921. As Publicity Officer of the Bengal branch of the Congress, uncle was entrusted with the task of organizing the *hartal* in Calcutta and throughout the province of Bengal. The demonstration was a unique success in Northern India and in the city of Calcutta in particular, thanks particularly to the herculean efforts of uncle. Other exciting events followed like defying the official ban by Sreejukta Basanti Devi, the brave and noble wife of Deshbandhu Das, and her arrest. Finally, orders were issued for the arrest of Deshbandhu Das, and his close associates including uncle, and on the 10th December, 1921, they were all clapped in prison and subsequently sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

My mother used to visit Deshbandhu's house quite often in those days and sometimes used to take us, the children, along with her. I saw Mahatma Gandhi there for the first time. He was even then clad in loin cloth. My first glimpse of Pandit Motilal Nehru was likewise at the same place What a contrast between the two—the one in loin cloth and the other

immaculately dressed in the finest hand-spun and hand-woven clothes ! Pandit Jawharlal Nehru did not visit Calcutta during the non-cooperation movement, being too much preoccupied in his own province known then as the United Provinces.

During the year 1921 after uncle's return from England, our house in 38/2, Elgin Road became the meeting place not merely of old revolutionaries who had joined the non-cooperation movement under the persuasion of the towering personality of Deshbandhu Das, but also of famous writers, specially of patriotic literature, musicians, and others. Kazi Nazrul Islam and Dilip Kumar Roy used to come almost every Sunday afternoon and regale us with their songs and recitations. Kazi Nazrul's patriotic songs had not been recorded at the time, and it was, indeed, a rare treat to be entertained to them by the poet singing or reciting them himself Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the novelist of immortal fame, was also an occasional visitor, and during the years that followed Sarat Chandra's acquaintance with uncle Subhas brought about by Deshbandhu Das ripened into deep affection and friendship.

Uncle along with others had at first been kept in the Presidency Jail. Deshbandhu Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were also confined in the same jail. Subsequently, they were transferred to Alipore Central Jail. I remember having been taken twice or thrice to interview uncle at the Presidency Jail. The interview with political prisoners of his standing used to be held at the big office to the left on entrance through the main gate. The office was big enough to accommodate several groups for interview and on each occasion I had been there, I saw Sreejukta Basanti Devi and others of the Das family interviewing Deshbandhu.

Censorship of the interview in those days existed in name only. How very different things became later !

Gandhiji declared the attainment of 'Swaraj' within a year and in common with the people of India, we were led to believe that 'Swaraj' would be won before the end of 1921. Also, we heard that the Viceroy had sent his emissary to negotiate with Deshbandhu Das at the Alipore Central Jail. But quite early in the year 1922, we were somewhat astounded to learn that the non-cooperation movement had been suddenly suspended by Mahatma Gandhi. This, we understood later, was the upshot of the incident at Chauri-Chaura, a village in the United Provinces, where in February, 1922, a village mob driven to frenzy set fire to the police station and killed a number of policemen. The suspension of the movement led to rapid evaporation of the exuberant enthusiasm that had been generated in the country.

My father, Sarat Chandra, had till then kept himself aloof from the non-cooperation movement though he lent the strongest moral and financial support to uncle. He was, however, being drawn slowly but surely into the freedom movement, and one of the first signs thereof was that he was persuaded by Sreejukta Basanti Devi to accompany her in May, 1922, to Chittagong, the venue of the annual conference of Congressmen in Bengal of which she had been elected President. Her presidential speech foreshadowed the council-entry programme, subsequently advocated by Deshbandhu Das after his release from prison towards August, 1922. Uncle too was released from jail at the same time.

Almost immediately after his release, uncle was deputed to North Bengal to help organize relief for people rendered homeless and destitute by floods of

unprecedented magnitude that had occurred there towards the end of September, 1922. The operations conducted by the public without practically no aid from the Government were so successful as to win unstinted praise even of the then Governor of Bengal, Lord Ronaldshay (later Lord Zetland), who characterized uncle as an organizing genius.

In December, 1922, the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Gaya under the presidentship of Deshbandhu Das. The council-entry programme advocated by Deshbandhu was, however, rejected by the Congress. He thereupon resigned his office and founded his 'Swaraj Party" of which uncle became a prominent member.

The year 1923 opened with a strenuous programme of work for uncle and in fact the Swaraj Party as a whole. One of the first things the party did in Cacutta was to publish a daily newspaper of four pages, called *Banglar Katha* under the editorship of uncle. A special session of the Congress was held in Delhi in September presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad where a compromise was effected between the Swaraj Party and the supporters of Gandhiji permitting Congressmen belonging to the former to take part in the forthcoming elections to the provincial and central legislatures and pursue a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent opposition to the Government within the legislative councils and assemblies to "mend or end" the dyarchical constitution thrust on the country. Though elections were hardly two months away and the party had a tough fight ahead, the members returned from Delhi overjoyed at their success on having neutralized the opposition, and with tremendous faith and confidence in the future. In October, 1923, Deshbandhu Das launched his daily paper *Forward* and uncle was

put in charge of its publication which made him pass many a sleepless night, and we, the family members, saw little of him those days. Elections to the legislatures which followed towards the end of the year resulted in remarkable victory for the Swaraj Party. Deshbandhu's towering leadership and magnetic personality had drawn into the fold of the Swaraj Party many distinguished persons who had not taken active part in politics till then. They were from all walks of life, some of them having already made their mark in their respective professions Apart from father, the names of Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami and Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar may be recalled in this connection. Surprisingly, however, though Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy stood close to Deshbandhu Das in those days in politics, he successfully resisted formal enrolment as a member of the Swaraj Party. Even when he stood as a candidate against Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee in the election to the Bengal Legislative Council, he contested and won the same as an independent supported by the Swaraj Party. Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami was elected a member of the Central Assembly on Swarajist ticket and earned great distinction for his singular debating skill and superb oratory. Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar became the Chief Whip of the Swaraj Party in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1923 Father chose not to stand for the election in 1923 Father and Messrs Tulsi Chandra Goswami and Nalini Ranjan Sarkar were chosen by Deshbandhu Das as members of the Board of Directors of *Forward*, the party organ. There were some sensational results in the election such as the defeat of Mr. Satish Ranjan Das, later Law Member, Government of India, and of no less a person than Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, the father of Indian natio-

nalism. Uncle did not stand for election to the Bengal Legislative Council in the year 1923 for reasons which we did not know at the time. Deshbandhu Das had thought of a bigger assignment for him, but this was revealed only after a few months.

'Towards the end of 1923, a very big reception was given by uncle on the occasion of the resounding success of the Swaraj Party in the elections to the legislatures at which all the prominent Swarajists of Bengal and other provinces headed by Deshbandhu Das were present. The date of the reception coincided with some important meeting of the All India Swaraj Party and we were privileged to welcome Pandit Motilal Nehru for the first time to our house. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu who also was on a visit to Calcutta at the time and staying along with Pandit Nehru as Deshbandhu Das's guest graced the occasion with her presence though she was not a Swarajist but a Gandhite. So far as I remember, Mr. Vitalbhai J Patel could not come to Calcutta at the time. The two most prominent leaders of the Swaraj Party in U P. and Delhi respectively—Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani and Mr. Asaf Ali, who were present were then putting up with us. Also, present were the Swarajist leaders of the then Central Provinces, Dr B. S. Moonje, Mr. M. V. Abhayankar, and Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao, who were likewise staying at our residence in 38/1, Elgin Road. After Deshbandhu's death, Dr. Moonje and Mr. Raghavendra Rao gradually drifted away from the Swaraj Party, the former ultimately joining the Hindu Mahasabha and the latter becoming an Executive Councillor of the Government of the then Central Provinces. The leading members of the Swaraj Party in Bengal including Messrs J. M. Sengupta, Kiran Sankar Roy, Nirmal Chandra Chunder, Tulsi Chandra Goswami, Nalini

Ranjan Sarkar, and others attended the reception.

The elections to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, the largest municipality in India, were held in March, 1924, under the amended Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923. The Swaraj Party contested the election and was returned with a safe majority. Deshbandhu Das was elected the first Mayor and Mr. Hasan Saheed Suhrawardy* Deputy Mayor, at the first meeting of the newly elected municipal body. My father, Sarat Chandra, was elected as one of the five Swarajist Aldermen of the Corporation. Soon after, uncle was appointed the Chief Executive Officer, that is, the head of the municipal administration. At the time of his appointment to this important post, uncle was only twenty-seven years old.

Certain changes in our domestic arrangement followed soon after uncle's appointment to the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Want of sufficient accommodation in our Elgin Road house was being felt since the year 1923 A few months before uncle's arrival home, my eldest uncle, Satish Chandra, had returned from England after being called to the bar and settled down in Calcutta. This and father's ever-growing practice coupled with the need for providing the requisite working space for both father and uncle created a very big accommodation problem. On top of this, guests from other provinces of the country had to be put up almost throughout the year. In order to provide additional accommodation, specially for guests, the adjacent house viz , 38/1, Elgin Road, was taken late in the year 1923 by father on rent from the owner, who in this case

*Who as Chief Minister of undivided Bengal was responsible for the *Great Calcutta Killing* on the 16th August, 1946. Subsequently, he opted for Pakistan and later became Prime Minister of that country.

happened to be Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, the eminent barrister and father's senior. Till about the middle of the year 1924, the house was used as an annexe and guest house of 38/2 and no separate establishment was provided. Gradually, however, the need for a separate and self-contained establishment for 38/1 was strongly felt and it was arranged that father with his family would move into that house after the Puja vacation in November that year and take charge of the establishment. Early in September, our whole family with our grandparents, Janaki Nath and Prabhabati, went for a visit to Kashmir. At about the same time, uncle shifted his study, living room, and bed room to 38/1. We were on our way back to Calcutta towards the end of October after visiting some places in the Punjab and U.P. When our train halted at Lilloah just a few miles from Howrah station, we were dumbfounded to read in the morning papers of uncle's arrest on the previous day under the infamous Regulation III of 1818. Deshbhandu Das had gone for a short rest and change to Simla, only a few days ago and was not in the city when uncle was arrested. He hurried back to Calcutta immediately on receipt of the news of uncle's arrest and that of Messrs. Anil Baran Roy and Satyendra Chandra Mitra, Swarajist members of the Bengal Legislative Council, and others. He returned to the city on the 27th October, 1924.

The sweeping arrests of leading Swarajists under the 'Lawless law'' created tremendous excitement all over the country, particularly in Bengal. The public agitation against the arrests—led by Deshbandhu Das from a hundred platforms—the most memorable and moving speech having been delivered by him from the Mayoral chair of the Calcutta Corporation—was so very strong that it was thought that the Government

would bow to popular demand and release uncle and other detenus. Unfortunately, however, our hopes were soon belied. The then Anglo-Indian newspapers of Calcutta, *The Statesman* and *The Englishman* came out with statements—possibly inspired by official circles—that uncle was the brain of the revolutionary movement. His solicitors thereupon filed legal proceedings against the papers for defamation and claimed damages. The proceedings dragged on for months and came up for final disposal before the Calcutta High Court only towards the end of 1925. Judgment was given in favour of uncle and damages awarded against both the papers Sir B. C. Mitter, Sir N. N. Sircar, and Sir A. K. Roy among others appeared for uncle and the public were treated to a brilliant display of rare forensic skill on the part of the then legal luminaries on the Indian firmament. The malicious and mendacious statements made by the Anglo-Indian-papers and the officials naturally found no credence amongst the public and it was thought by almost everybody except the henchmen of the Government that the real object of the Government was to strike at the Swarajist administration of the Calcutta Corporation. It was public knowledge at the time that uncle was engaged and wholly absorbed in municipal work which started from day-break and continued till after midnight so that he had been forced to give up politics altogether including his connection with *Forward* since his appointment as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation of Calcutta. He was up at dawn before anybody else in the family and started off the day with a visit to the Palta Water Works, and worked all day even into the night and was the last man in the house to go to bed. Also, it was fully known to the Government officialdom that he had

surrendered half his monthly salary of Rs. 3000/- as Chief Executive Officer to the Corporation and even the half which he used to draw was fully utilized in helping poor and needy students. In this he emulated the noble example of his father, Janaki Nath, to whose benefaction and generosity many a student in Cuttack and in Calcutta owed not merely their education but their career. The motor car provided to him by the Corporation was used solely for official work. We were surprised to see him discard the Corporation car at the end of official duties and requisition our house car to attend to his personal engagements. After uncle's arrest in 1924, father came forward to extend his assistance to every one of those students who had till then been receiving monetary aid from uncle. We shifted to the premises 38/1, Elgin Road as had already been arranged by the end of the year 1924 and waited in anxious expectation of the day when uncle would return home to the family In the absence of uncle and increasing involvement of father in Bengal politics, the importance so long attached to the house in 38/2, Elgin Road now shifted to 38/1. Deshbandhu Das himself used to drop in there occasionally, not to speak of other leaders

Uncle was at first lodged in the Alipore Central Jail, but was transferred to Berhampore Jail early in December, 1924. The Government made very stiff rules for interview with uncle and other detenus, and as far as I remember except father and, of course, Deshbandhu Das, none of us family-members could have interview with uncle after his arrest in October, 1924.

CHAPTER THREE

1925-1927
Banishment to Burma and Return Home

More ominous news about uncle was in store for us. Early in the year 1925, we learned that he had been transferred from Berhampore to Mandalay Jail in Upper Burma. The news of his transfer was kept a closely-guarded secret by the Government and we, including father himself, had no inkling of this until uncle had been safely lodged in Mandalay. Uncle's stay at Berhampore did not last more than two months. On the 25th January 1925, he was suddenly served with orders of transfer to Calcutta. After being brought down to Calcutta at midnight, he was taken to the jetty next morning before dawn and put on board a ship bound for Rangoon. From Rangoon, uncle and other State prisoners were taken by train under heavy police guard to Mandalay and lodged there.

When the year 1925 opened the political situation in India remained unchanged. Deshbandhu Das continued in power and the Swaraj Party in the Legislative Council in Bengal and in the Legislative Assembly

in New Delhi kept up relentless pressure on the Government. This was reinforced by campaign in the Press, notably by *Forward,* the official organ of the Swaraj Party, which created tremendous sensation in the country by getting hold of and publishing copies and even facsimilies of secret state documents, thereby causing great embarrassment to the Government. At this time, father had taken over the Managing Directorship of the paper.

Although it was not known to the outside world that some sort of negotiations were then going on between Deshbandhu Das and the Government for a settlement of the question of self-government for India, it was not impossible for a young member of a politically conscious family like ours with a nose for news to guess that something of that nature was in the offing. Subsequently, it was announced that the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, would make an important pronouncement about India. That was towards April, 1925 Deshbandhu Das, we were told, was himself rather optimistic about the outcome of his negotiations when he left for Darjeeling for some rest and change he sorely needed. His health was steadily improving when in the second week of June, he fell seriously ill and died on the 16th June, 1925. No wonder that Lord Birkenhead's much-advertised pronouncement on the 7th July, coming as it did in the wake of Deshbandhu's disappearance from the political scene, contained nothing but platitudes. With his death began a period of all-round depression in the country as a whole, which lasted till the middle of the year 1927. Dissensions in the Swaraj Party began in Maharashtra and these gradually spread to other provinces including Bengal The only silver lining in the dark clouds was the newspaper, *Forward,* which

by then became a force by itself, the like of which had not been seen in India before. The paper set new standards in fearless and honest journalism.

Along with uncle, a number of other prominent leaders including Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra were kept confined in Mandalay in 1925. In October, 1925, the detenus performed the Durga Puja inside the jail. I still remember that a big parcel containing new clothes was sent by father on the occasion to Mandalay. The Superintendent of the jail had given the necessary permission and provisionally sanctioned funds for the ceremony in anticipation of Government approval in due course. However, when the time came for the Government to accord their approval, they refused to sanction the expenditure incurred This forced uncle and others to resort to hunger-strike in February, 1926. The authorities did their best to impose a black-out on the news and also stopped correspondence of the detenus with the outside world. In spite of this, *Forward* published not only the news of the hunger-strike, but the text of the ultimatum the State prisoners had sent to the Government.

About the same time, ***Forward*** published extracts from the report of the Indian Jail Committee of 1919-21 including the evidence given before this committee by Lt. Col Mulvany, a high official of the Prison Department stating that he had been forced by his superior officer, the Inspector-General of Prisons of Bengal, to withdraw the health reports he had sent of some State prisoners and to send in false reports instead. These startling disclosures raised a storm of indignation all over the country. In the Indian Legislative Assembly which was then in session in Delhi, Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami moved the adjournment of the House over the hunger-strike in Mandalay Jail

and referred to the evidence of Lt. Col. Mulvany. The Home Member confronted by such a situation promised to redress the grievances of the State prisoners on hunger-strike and orders were issued soon after sanctioning the expenditure incurred by the State prisoners on account of the Puja. The hunger-strike was thereupon terminated. Maulana Shaukat Ali, the elder of the famous Ali Brothers, who had gone on a tour of Burma at the time visited the State prisoners at Mandalay while they were still on hunger-strike and assured them that the whole country would support their demand. Though at that time the Ali Brothers had all but withdrawn from the Congress, Maulana Shaukat Ali on his return from Burma addressed a meeting organised by the Bengal Congress and delivered an impassioned speech demanding unconditional release of the State prisoners detained without trial.

Uncle and other State prisoners were permitted to write only limited number of letters per week. The letters were delivered to the addressees only after they had been censored and passed by the Intelligence Branch of the Bengal Police located at Lord Sinha Road, Calcutta. Letters addressed to uncle had also to be directed to Lord Sinha Road for censoring before onward transmission to him in Burma. It often happened that letters from uncle were received in very badly mutilated condition. No amount of protest on our part on that score was of any avail and there was no option but to put up with such a state of affairs. Amongst our family-members, uncle used to write mostly to father. He wrote quite a few letters to my mother, Shrimati Bivabati Bose, as well. Almost all the letters written by him to my parents and the most important ones written to others have

since been published at various times and places.

I ventured to write to him at Mandalay on a few occasions—for the first time in July, 1926, when I was studying in the final year for the Matriculation Examination. On the 26th August, 1926, uncle replied* to me from Mandalay Jail, as follows:

> "I received your letter of the 3rd July long ago. I could not reply to it due to various reasons. It is no longer warm here, it rains a little occasionally . . . . When does your school close for the Puja vacation?
>
> "You should from now on think deeply which particular subject you should take up for study in the college. If you do not think it over deeply now, there may be difficulty in future. You should at the same time consider which profession you wish to take up in future It is not possible to decide on the course of study in the college unless you come to a decision on your career. If you choose the wrong course of study at the college, there is risk of ruining your future career. You should decide on your future profession after making an analysis of your own bent, natural inclinations, and environments Thereafter you should select your course of study at the college in tune with your future profession If you decide on your course of study in a whimsical manner, you may have to change your subjects after 2/3 years. I have seen that many students get themselves admitted into the B. A class after passing the I Sc. Examination and also that many finally get into the Law College after their M Sc and start practising law after passing B L Choosing subjects in a whimsical manner. leads to such consequences You should, therefore, think over

*The letter was in Bengali and the above is the English rendering thereof.

the matter deeply and make your decision My own view is that it would be good to take up the Science course, but I do not know what your natural inclinations are. If you do not wish to take up service or do not wish to qualify for the bar, then it may be profitable to take up the Science course. You should first of all make up your mind as to whether you wish to become a barrister Once you do that, decision on other matters will be easy

"Mejdada[1] has written too, he wishes to come and spend a month at Maymyo[2] and that you all will come with him. I am trying to fix up lodging and will send a telegram in due course If you do come, please obtain from the Bengal Government permission for all of you to have interview with me

"I hope you are doing well My health is so so With love.

Your
Rangakakababu[3]

Mandalay being so far from Calcutta, it was no possible for us, family-members, to have interviews with uncle at regular intervals. This would have been easier, had uncle been kept in a prison in or near Calcutta. It was, of course, the intention of the Government to keep down interviews with the State prisoners to the minimum and that was one of the reasons for transferring them to far-away places Until the middle of July, 1926, that is, in about 21 months, the family-members could manage to have only three interviews with uncle in Burma—father twice and another uncle of ours once Father was,

1) My father—Sarat Chandra Bose
2) A hill station near Mandalay.
3) We, nephews and nieces used to address uncle thus

therefore, very keen on going to Burma during the long Puja vacation in September/October, 1926, and having several interviews with uncle more than once if possible in the course of his stay. As the authorities would not allow interview on consecutive days, father thought of spending at least a month in Burma, mostly in Maymyo, a hill station in Upper Burma close to Mandalay.

My mother was equally anxious to meet uncle and naturally we too were keen on seeing him. It was, therefore, planned by father to combine his usual Puja holidays with interviews with uncle and also take the whole family to see Burma. But certain developments took place which ultimately compelled father to give up the idea.

The Legislatures both in the provinces and the Centre were dissolved in the latter half of the year 1926 and fresh elections were fixed for November the same year. The Bengal Congress Party decided to nominate uncle and Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra as candidates for election. Uncle was offered the North Calcutta constituency for the Bengal Legislative Council and Mr. Mitra, a constituency for the then Indian Legislative Assembly. Mr. Anil Baran Roy who had been released from detention the previous year retired from politics after his release and joined the Aurobindo Ashram at Pondichery. North Calcutta happened to be one of the few constituencies where Swaraj Party even under Deshbandhu's leadership had suffered defeat in the elections in 1923, the seat having been retained by Mr. J. N. Basu, the leader of the Liberal Party in Bengal. Mr Basu was so highly popular in his constituency that the Congress could not think of any other candidate except uncle who could put up even a show of contest, much less dislodge him. Apart

from the personality of uncle, it was also felt by the party that his victory at the polls would be a public censure of the Government and force the latter to release him ultimately. Hence, the offer went out to uncle in Mandalay to contest the election and was accepted.

Father took a leading part in organizing the elections on behalf of the Congress Party and naturally had to bear the brunt of the election campaign on uncle's behalf and forget his own holiday. The election organization in the constituency was in charge of Mr. Durga Charan Banerjee, one of the leading solicitors of Calcutta. He was responsible for introducing certain novel and up-to-date methods including among others the use of rockets for distributing leaflets and posters showing the candidate behind prison bars

Sreejukta Basanti Devi, widow of the late Deshbandhu Das issued a fervent appeal to the electorate of North Calcutta through *Forward* which appeared in its issue of the 1st October. After referring therein to the part played by uncle as the right-hand man of her late husband and the fond hope cherished by the latter that the work started by him would be brought to fruition by uncle, his burning patriotism, stupendous sacrifice and unparalleled enthusiasm for work, she said that uncle's election would be an honour to the country She concluded the appeal by remarking that she would have personally approached the electorate but for her ill-health and mental depression. She, however, expressed the hope that it would not be necessary in this case to do so.

I accompanied my grandmother, Prabhabati Bose, and my mother, Bivabati Bose on their tour of the polling booths, and there was no doubt from the tremendous enthusiasm shown by the voters and the public

in general that uncle would be elected by a thumping majority, as indeed he was, securing 2110 votes against only 588 obtained by his rival. In spite of this, the Government continued to hold uncle in detention.

In the meantime, the unfavourable climatic and other conditions in Mandalay jail and the effect of the hunger-strike in February that year began to tell upon uncle's health which rapidly deteriorated. This was aggravated when in the winter of the same year, uncle had an attack of broncho-pneumonia. After the attack, he could not shake off the temperature and started losing weight. Matters grew so serious that the Government had him transferred to Rangoon for examination by a medical board consisting of one Government nominee, Lt. Col. Kelsall, and my uncle, Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose. The board made a recommendation among others that uncle should not continue to be kept detained in prison, but be sent to Switzerland for treatment Based on the recommendation made by the medical board, the Government made an offer in the Bengal Legislative Council that if uncle liked to go to Switzerland at his own expense, they would release him, but that he would have to board the ship from the Burmese port and proceed straight to Europe without being permitted to come to India and return to the country before the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act had been repealed. Uncle rejected this conditional offer and wrote to father at great length explaining his reasons for rejection point by point. It became a historic document and was published in the newspapers at the time. This letter reveal his character more truly than anything else. Two passages in particular from uncle's letter to father rejecting the Government's offer quoted below will inspire freedom fighters of all countries for all time.

"I have on this occasion tried to anticipate the worst that may befall me, if I do not accept the offer of the Government but I have not been able to persuade myself that a permanent exile from the land of my birth would be better than life in a jail leading to the sepulchre. I do not quail before this cheerless prospect for I believe as the poet does that 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave."

"We have got to suffer a lot, both individually and collectively, before the priceless treasure of freedom can be secured. Thank God, I am at peace with myself and I can face with equanimity any ordeal that He in his wisdom may choose to visit me with. I regard myself as doing penance in my own humble way for the past sins of our nation and I am and shall be happy in my atonement Our thoughts will not die—our ideas will not fade from the nation's memory and posterity will be the heirs of our fondest dreams-this is the faith which shall sustain me in my tribulation for ever and forever"

I received another letter from uncle dated the 16th March, 1927, from Rangoon Jail, the English rendering of which is given below—

"I received your letter dated 15.1 27 long ago. I could not reply to it for various reasons

"I do hope you will be able to show good results in your examination. How do you spend your time now ? Will you go out anywhere during the holidays ?

"You have enquired about my health—I write to Mejdada giving all the news My health at present is not good—it is getting worse

"The time has now come to think seriously about the course of study you will take up at the College I have already communicated to you my views on the subject. It is not

necessary to add anything more. I hope you all are doing well. You should take regular physical exercise so that your body may become strong

"Accept my love."

I had appeared in the Matriculation Examination in March, 1927. As the results thereof were not due before May, I had been sent to Puri to spend the vacation with grandparents. My grandfather, Janaki Nath Bose, used to reside permanently at Cuttack and had a few years before built his own house at Puri where he used to spend the weekends and short holidays. Also, he was often obliged to visit Puri on professional calls. One or other of his sons or daughters or near relatives used to visit Puri during summer or Pujas with their families every year, and except during the rainy season, one or other group of family-members lived in the house.

At the time I visited Puri, Mr. Purna Chandra Das, who was a State prisoner either under Regulation III of 1818 or Bengal Ordinance had been living in Puri, having been externed from Bengal under the orders of the Government. I used to meet him almost everyday on the sea-beach Another gentleman whom I came to meet for the first time was Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose* He had his own house at Puri and happened to be our next-door neighbour.

About the middle of the second week of May, a telegram was received by grandfather at Puri from father to the effect that uncle would be passing through Calcutta on his way to Almora Jail and that father was trying to arrange for an interview with

*The renowned authropologist and Gandhian scholar who was Gandhiji's Secretary at Noakhali during the communal riots in 1946

uncle for grandparents. It was added that another telegram would follow as soon as things had been fixed up. On the 16th May, late in the morning, another telegram came from father to the effect that the then Governor of Bengal. Sir Stanley Jackson, in his telegraphic message to father from Darjeeling had ordered uncle's unconditional release and had requested him to take charge of uncle. The same afternoon, a second telegram was received by grandfather from father informing him of uncle's coming home (to 38/1, Elgin Road).

In those days, trunk telephones had not been introduced in India and one had to rely for urgent messages on the telegraphic system. However, strange as it may seem, telegrams, specially urgent ones, used to reach and be delivered to their destination much more quickly than they are now. Grandparents decided to start for Calcutta on the day following. The next morning, uncle, Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose, arrived at Puri to escort his parents to Calcutta. He had been sent by father to give detailed news of events leading to uncle's release to grandparents and to prepare them beforehand so as to lessen their mental shock which they were bound to experience on meeting uncle lying prostrate in a serious condition. We all left Puri on the 17th and arrived in Calcutta on the 18th May, 1927, and met uncle after an absence of nearly three years.

The physicians, Sir Nilratan Sircar, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, and Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose advised uncle complete rest in bed during the prescribed course of treatment, lasting a few weeks Although the doctors had forbidden interviews with uncle in the beginning, they were obliged to relax the order in the course of a few days and permit limited interviews with friends

and relatives. One of the most important personages for whom exception was made in the matter of interviews was Rev. U. Ottama, then un-crowned king of the Burmese people. He was a *hpongy,* i.e., Buddhist priest. Rev. Ottama had then been living in exile in Calcutta. He was always dressed in bright saffron robes after the manner of *hpongyis.* He used to come to visit uncle almost every week and be received by uncle and everybody else in our family with great respect and warmth and was often invited to share meals with us It was the rule with the *hpongyis* to have their last meal before sunset, and Rev Ottama strictly adhered to the rule. Rev. Ottama spoke Bengali fluently and also wrote the language in Bengali script fairly correctly.

It was a matter of singular fortune that uncle made satisfactory progress towards recovery and was taken for a change of climate to Shillong after a few weeks. A big bungalow was taken on lease for six months. The bungalow was known by the name of 'Kelsall Lodge' and situated on a ridge overlooking the polo ground and commanding a fine view of the neighbouring hills Uncle spent nearly five months in Shillong My grandmother and my mother took turns in keeping house at Shillong. My grandfather and father also spent with uncle in Shillong such time as they could spare in between their exacting professional and public work. Towards the end of September, our whole family went up to Shillong and spent the entire Puja vacation there.

By October, 1927, uncle recouped his health well enough to go out for long walks. He had in the meantime procured a detailed map of Shillong and its environs and often used to go out exploring the beautiful countryside I was the eldest amongst his nephews

and happened to be a good walker and was therefore invariably selected to accompany him on his excursions on foot. My younger brothers and cousins fought shy of long walks and were, therefore, dropped from such parties. In course of our excursions and also otherwise, uncle endeavoured to inculcate a spirit of adventure in his nephews and nieces.

Apart from friends and relations who happened to visit Shillong at the time, I remember two of the then most important political leaders of Assam, Messrs T. R. Phookan and Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, coming to see uncle occasionally and having long discussions with uncle and father. Mr. Phookan happened to be the most important political leader of Assam at that time and was a Swarajist member of the Indian Legislative Assembly. I had seen him before at our house in 38/1, Elgin Road, Calcutta. Of Mr Bardoloi I had heard before, but saw him for the first time in Shillong. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, too, was a frequent visitor both as the personal physician and a colleague in the political field He had his own fine house in Shillong and visited the place at least twice a year. In fact, Shillong used to be his place of retreat and remained so till about the late 'forties.

Early in November, 1927, our temporary household at Shillong was finally wound up and uncle and all of us returned to Calcutta His recovery from illness had been as remarkable as it had been complete and he felt himself strong enough physically to undertake the most arduous duties that lay ahead of him. In spite of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi had been living in retirement from active politics and that Pandit Motilal Nehru had gone to Europe for a prolonged stay, there were unmistakable signs by the middle of the year that the country was about to get over the

worst period of depression which had set in after the death of Deshbandhu Das. The same year also saw the emergence of a new leader of all-India stature in the person of the late Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, the well-known lawyer, who had formerly been the Advocate-General of Madras. In August, there had once again been a trial of strength between the Government and the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Council in which the Government was defeated. Though still in weak health, uncle had come down to Calcutta temporarily to take his seat as a member of the Council representing North Calcutta and cast his vote against the Government. From then onwards the temper of the country started rising and there were insistent demands for new leadership.

This was forcefully demonstrated by the election of uncle as President of the Bengal Congress Committee at its annual meeting held later in the month. The Government themselves provided an impetus, perhaps the most potent, to the new awakening by their announcement on the 28th November, 1927, of the appointment of a Statutory Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John (later Lord) Simon to review the political situation in India and to make their recommendations on the extension or otherwise of the degree of responsible government in India. The Congress immediately decided to boycott the All-White Commission which did not have a single Indian as member.

Soon after our return from Shillong, we vacated the house in 38/1, Elgin Road and moved into our new house in 1, Woodburn Park, which was then ready for occupation. Uncle also moved in along with us and took up residence there. However, as grandparents were then staying in our old house in 38/2, Elgin Road

and as grandmother intended to stay on for a few months more in Calcutta, uncle decided to go and live temporarily in the old house and accordingly shifted again from Woodburn Park. Grandfather still continued to divide his vacations between Calcutta and Puri while residing permanently in Cuttack.

In November, soon after we had moved into our new house, an All-India Unity Conference was convened in Calcutta by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and was presided over by him. We had the privilege of welcoming him as a guest in our house during the session of the Conference. Though Mr. Iyengar had been to Europe and was in fact just back from a tour of that continent then, he still retained his orthodox habits and was very particular about the type of food he ate. He had even brought with him his own cook and thanks to him, we, the members of the family, got our first taste of the delicious South Indian savouries Also, he preferred to have his meals squatting on the floor in the traditional Indian fashion. Years later—in 1943—on our way to interview father who was then detained at Mercara in Coorg—we stopped in Madras for a couple of days and accepted the kind hospitality of Mr. Iyengar's son—Mr. S. Parthasarathi—and put up at his fine and beautiful house built in modern style and provided with all modern comforts. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was then dead, but Mrs. Iyengar was still living. Mr. Parthasarathi told us that the house had in fact been built by his father. The house had an annexe, specially built to accommodate non-vegetarian guests and a cook was specially attached to the annexe to prepare non-vegetarian dishes.

Towards the end of December, the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Madras and was presided over by Dr. M. A. Ansari, the noted

Nationalist Muslim leader of Delhi. Uncle did not attend the Madras session, but the factor which lent great significance to the proceedings of the Congress was the participation therein of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had returned from Europe only a few days earlier. He had been to Europe with his ailing wife, Srimati Kamala Nehru, for nearly two years and returned to India after she was a little better In Madras, Pandit Nehru declared himself to be a Socialist and gave expression to a new ideology based on socalism, which was very welcome to the radicals in the Congress and to the youth organizations in the country

At the Madras Congress a resolution was passed boycotting the Simon Commission 'at every stage and in every form' and also another directing the Working Committee to convene an All-India All Parties Conference for drawing up a constitution for India acceptable to all parties. Uncle was appoined one of the General Secretaries of the Congress along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Shuaib Quereshi.*

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*Subsequently went over to Pakistan and attained great importance in the political life of that country.

CHAPTER FOUR

1928-1929
Prelude to Mass Movement

The Simon Commission arrived in India in February, 1928, and was greeted with boycott demonstrations all over the country. Though the demonstrations were organized under the direction of the Congress Working Committee, this was not followed up by more positive action on the part of the Congress leaders who appeared to have still not got over their inertia. Only in Bengal, the Provincial Congress Committee on its own responsibility under the head of its President, that is, uncle, launched an intensive campaign for the boycott of British goods on the day the Commission landed in Bombay. Side by side with mass demonstrations and meetings, there were demonstrations by youths and students all over the province. While the authorities of most of the Colleges exercised discretion in handling the situation, those of the Government educational institutions, notably the Presidency College of Calcutta, tried to be unduly vindictive and this led to prolonged unrest. The students of Bengal felt keenly

the need of an organization of their own, which could stand up for their rights and effectively safeguard their interests and this led to the birth of the All-Bengal Students' Association with the blessings of uncle.

In the clashes that took place between the unarmed demonstrators and the armed police at Lahore, the 'Lion of Punjab', Lala Lajpat Rai, who was heading the procession, was seriously injured in the attack by the police and succumbed to the injuries in a few days.

Early in the year 1928, my grandmother Prabhabati Bose, went back to Cuttack Before she left, she asked uncle to go and live with father in 1, Woodburn Park. Accordingly, he came back to 1, Woodburn Park where he lived till the end of 1931, except for spells of imprisonment during the period.

The four years uncle lived with us was marked by intense and even ceaseless activities, so much so that my mother was anxious that his health may once again give way. From morning till late in the night he had hardly a few moments' rest. Very often his meal-times were most irregular. On top of all this, he had to go out frequently on tours not only in the districts but outside Bengal.

Most of the State prisoners who had been detained under Regulation III of 1818 or the Bengal Ordinance since 1923-24 were at the end of 1927 still imprisoned in jail or kept interned in small unhealthy places. A raging and tearing campaign was launched by uncle for their release. Side by side with the movement demanding their release, a fund, known as "Detenus' Fund", was started by him to provide badly-needed relief to the families of the detenus, some of whom were on the verge of ruin. This received the most

enthusiastic response from the public in general, and the students in particular. Fund collection committees were formed in every educational institution in Bengal, and the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, where I was a student at the time, took the lead in organizing collection of funds, and a large sum was handed over to uncle on behalf of the students of that College.

The All-Parties Conference met several times in Delhi, and finally at its meeting in May, 1928, appointed a small committee with Pandit Motilal Nehru as Chairman to draft a report on the future constitution of India. Uncle was made a member of the Committee. The Committee issued in August, 1928, a unanimous report, subject to certain reservations made in the preamble stating that a minority including uncle would not accept Dominion status and pressed for complete national independence as the basis of the constitution In the same month following the All-Parties Conference in Lucknow, the Independence for India League was founded by uncle and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The League, however, withered away in less than a year, to be more precise, after the session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in December, mainly because a large number of members of the League did not sincerely believe in the objective of independence, but joined it in a fit of bravado.

The first All-Bengal Conference of students was held in August, 1928, in Calcutta under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Father had invited Pandit Nehru to be his guest on the occasion and he was good enough to accept our hospitality This was the first occasion we had him with us, but thereafter whenever Pandit Jawaharlal visited Calcutta till the year 1945, he would invariably put up with us. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, we found, was a man of regular

habits and would strictly observe his timings for meals. Further, he was particular about the food he ate, was a small eater, and completely avoided rich and spicy Indian dishes.

The year 1928 was also notable for labour unrest, chiefly in Eastern India. A strike involving about 20,000 workers broke out in the Works of Tata Iron & Steel Company at Jamshedpur. The strike dragged on for several months, and was on the point of collapse when, fervently implored by the workers, uncle took up its leadership, revived and strengthened it, which ultimately led to an honourable settlement This necessitated on uncle's part frequent visits to Jamshedpur and staying there for days at a stretch. The Tata strike firmly established uncle's preeminent position in the Trade Union movement.

The annual session of the Indian National Congress was scheduled to be held in Calcutta in December under the presidentship of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The attendance at the session was the largest since the inception of the Congress and all arrangements were made on a colossal and lavish scale. For the first time in the history of the Congress, nay of India, a huge national volunteer force was formed, dressed in military uniform and trained on proper military lines The volunteer force had its cavalry, infantry, and medical units as well as a Women's Corps. Uncle was made the General Officer Commanding of the Volunteer Force, and its parades, demonstrations and other services including preserving order in the pandal, regulation of traffic. etc., earned unstinted praise from everybody including the Calcutta Police. Mr. J. M. Sengupta was made the Chairman of the Reception Committee, but the detailed planning of every item connected with the Congress session

was left to uncle Apart from arrangements for accommodation of leaders and delegates from all parts of India, which were as perfect as possible, special cuisines were provided for each province. This was something unprecedented in the history of the Congress sessions, but it was not repeated in subsequent sessions of the Congress, much less bettered The President-elect on the day of his arrival in Calcutta was given an ovation, the like of which had not been witnessed in Calcutta before From the Howrah station, he was taken in a huge procession in a carriage drawn by forty white horses, the national volunteer force providing the vanguard and the rear-guard. Uncle, dressed in resplendent military uniform of the General Officer Commanding of the force, preceded the presidential carriage in an open car. The gigantic procession presented a spectacle of such orderliness and precision as to make it appear to have been organized and led by a military leader of genius In conformity with the type and scale of all other services, near-perfect arrangements for accommodation of the President, his family and entourage during their stay in Calcutta, and for looking after their comforts and convenience, were made by the Reception Committee. I had been detailed for duty as a volunteer at the President's camp to attend to his needs and requisitions and can testify that not merely there was no complaint from the President on that score, but that he was highly appreciative of the services provided at his camp.

Within the Congress at the time there were two groups, one led by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru who would be content with Dominion status and were in favour of accepting the Nehru Report in toto, and the other, that is, the Left wing led by uncle, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,

who wanted to accept the Nehru Report only on the basis of complete national independence There were frantic attempts behind the scenes to avoid an open split in the Congress session and the Left wing leaders were even persuaded to desist from pressing the issue to a division. The rank and file of the Left Wing, however, would not think of a compromise. Finally, the main resolution of the Congress was moved by Mahatma Gandhi and passed after an amendment moved by uncle was negatived by 1350 votes to 973. Uncle's amendment was to the effect that the Congress would be content with nothing short of independence and was supported among others by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and father Mr. J. M. Sengupta, Dr. B. C. Roy, and a few older leaders of Bengal supported Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had agreed to desist from pressing the issue to a division and in spite of the mandate of the Left Wing, he stuck to his stand and abstained from voting. The Calcutta Congress practically marked the beginning of the end of Mr Iyengar's political career. He had differences with Pandit Motilal Nehru, over the strategy to be followed in the Indian Legislative Assembly by the Swaraj Party of which he happened to be the Deputy Leader (Pandit Motilal Nehru was the Leader), and with Mahatma Gandhi over various issues. Nor did he have a good word for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In private conversations he would remark that Indian politics were about to be dominated by the trinity, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi whom he jokingly referred to as "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost", adding that the trinity would ultimately come to a compromise with the British Government against the country's interests. The fact remains that he gradually withdrew from

the political field in spite of earnest entreaties by uncle and others not to do so. But he maintained till the end extremely sweet personal relations with uncle and father and in fact our family.

Another very important conference which was held at the time and in fact in the Congress Pandal itself was the All-India Youth Congress which held its first session and was presided over by Mr. K. F Nariman, the Parsi leader from Bombay, the hero of the Backbay Reclamation Scheme libel case. Uncle was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and in the course of his address, he stirred up the hornet's nest by advocating activism as opposed to the passivism that was being preached from Sabarmati Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi and Pondicherry Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and further pleaded for modernization of the material side of life. The Youth Congress indicated the emergence of a new factor in the political life of the country and gave vocal expression to a more radical mentality. As an instance of this, the Youth Congress unanimously adopted the creed that its object was the attainment of complete national independence by 'all possible means' in contradistinction to that of the Indian National Congress by 'all peaceful and legitimate means' Others who took a prominent part in the Youth Congress were Mr. Yusuf Meherally of Bombay, Mr. Bhupati Majumder[1] and Mr. Girija Mukherjee[2]

The All-Parties Convention which was held in Calcutta during the Congress week had disastrous

1 Who later on became a Minister under the Congress regime in West Bengal

2 Who later came into prominence in the Azad Hind movement in Europe during the Second World War and still later served as a Counsellor of the Indian Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

consequences as it was not possible to get the Nehru Report ratified by the convention. On the whole, the year 1928 which started with so much hope ended on a note of disappointment

The year 1929 was characterized by unmistakable signs of upheaval that was to follow in 1930 such as, upsurge of revolutionary movement chiefly in the Punjab and Delhi, unrest in the labour world all over the country, and awakening among youths that was manifest everywhere. The sensational event of the year was the throwing of a bomb in the Legislative Assembly in Delhi during a sitting and the arrest of Sardar Bhagat Singh and Mr. Batukeshwar Dutt. This was followed by the round-up of a large number of young men all over the country and starting of an All-India conspiracy case, better known as Lahore Conspiracy case, about the middle of 1929. Among the prisoners was Mr. Jatin Das, who at the time held the rank of Major in the Bengal Volunteer Corps which came into existence at the time of the Calcutta Congress and of which uncle was the General Officer Commanding as already mentioned Soon after their arrest, the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners including Mr. Jatin Das made a demand of the Government that they should be accorded better treatment than ordinary criminals on the ground that they were political prisoners under trial. As the Government turned a deaf ear to the demand, they resorted to hunger-strike. In course of time, the hunger-strikers dropped off one by one, but Jatin Das would not turn back. In spite of intensive agitation in the Press, in meetings, and demonstrations demanding humane treatment of political prisoners, the Government refused to yield After 63 days' hunger strike, Jatin Das died on the 13th September the death of a martyr. His mortal

remains were brought down to Calcutta from Lahore for cremation and at every station people assembled in their thousands to pay homage. His body was received at the Howrah station by lakhs of people headed by uncle and lay in state at the Howrah Town Hall for nearly twenty-four hours, the Bengal Volunteer Corps mounting guard in full military uniform, much to the dislike of Congressmen owing allegiance to Mahatma Gandhi.

Throughout the year 1929, youth and student organizations grew up all over Bengal. Separate conferences for youths and students began to be held from then onwards. Uncle presided over the Central Provinces Youth Conference held at Nagpur and the Berar Students' Conference at Amraoti in December.

In Bengal, the Congress Party was able to overthrow and dismiss the Ministers repeatedly. The Governor, therefore, dissolved the Legislative Council and ordered a fresh election which resulted in the Congress Party coming back with added strength. On the eve of the election. an event occurred which created tremendous stir among the public. Judgment was delivered in a suit brought against the paper *Forward* by the then East Indian Railway for defamation for publishing reports damaging to the Company about a terrible railway accident at Dankuni near Calcutta. The Court awarded damages to the tune of Rs. 1,50,000/- against the paper and it was expected that this would force the paper which had become an eyesore to the Government to close down. *Forward* indeed ceased to appear the next day, but in its place another daily under the name, *New Forward,* made its appearance. The Government immediately started legal proceedings against the new paper, which were successfully circumvented by father and others by

withdrawing *New Forward* on the day following and replacing the same by another paper called *Liberty*. We heard from father subsequently that the top. Government officials had vowed to have the publication of *Forward* stopped even if for one day .Their feeling of discomfiture can, therefore, be better imagined than described as everybody knew that *Liberty* was nothing else but *Forward* under a different name with the same Mr. Satya Ranjan Bakshi as the Editor.

In the meantime, at a special meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in August, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the Congress session to be held in Lahore in December with the backing of Mahatma Gandhi. As a result of this, Pandit Jawaharlal was won over by the Mahatma for good.

In October, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax), issued a statement saying that he had been authorised by the British Government to state clearly that it was implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion Status. Following upon the above declaration, a conference of leaders of all parties was held in Delhi in November. The conference by an overwhelming majority issued a manifesto expressing appreciation of the Viceroy's statement and offering co-operation to the British Government in evolving a Dominion Constitution for India. Uncle, Dr. S. Kitchlew (of Lahore), and Maulana Abdul Bari (of Patna) refused to append their signatures thereto and issued a separate manifesto opposing the acceptance of Dominion status and the idea of participating in the so-called Round Table Conference. The manifesto pointed out, further, that in a real Round Table Conference only the belligerent parties should be re-

presented and that the Indian representatives should be selected not by the British Government, but by the Indian people. This was but a natural corollary to the uncompromising stand taken up by uncle at the Calcutta Congress and helped to widen the rift between the Right Wing led by Mahatma Gandhi, recently reinforced by the addition of Pandit Jawaharlal, and the Left Wing led by uncle.

In Bengal, Mr. J. M. Sengupta was won over by the Mahatma and the party formed under his leadership stood for unqualified obedience to the Mahatma and his policy. Matters came to a head in November at the annual general meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and in the keen contest which took place, uncle's party won by a narrow margin. This was the beginning of the Bengal Congress dispute which continued till the end of 1931. The breach in the Congress led to a split among the youths and students, and parallel organizations started functioning from then onwards. In place of one province-wide organization of students viz., All-Bengal Students' Association, which was dominated by the adherents of Mr. Sengupta, another provincial body under the name of "Bengal Provincial Students' Association" owing allegiance to uncle came into being and started functioning as a parallel organization The party alignments during the period 1928-29 were roughly as follows The splinter groups of ex-revolutionaries comprising the so-called *Jugantar* group with a few exceptions supported uncle, while the so-called *Anusilan* group stood behind Mr. Sengupta. The *Khadi* group was, of course, solidly lined up against uncle. The Swaraj Party in Bengal or rather the party as it existed before it captured the Congress machinery was split into two from top to bottom, one

section supporting uncle and the other siding with Mr. Sengupta. Most of the prominent Swarajist leaders like Messrs. Kiron Sankar Roy, T. C. Goswami, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, and father, however, lent powerful support to uncle. Among the leaders of the ex-revolutionaries, who figured prominently in the split at that time, Messrs. Surendra Mohan Ghosh (who later became a member of Parliament), Hari Kumar Chakravorty, Purna Chandra Das, Arun Chandra Guha, Monoranjan Gupta, Hem Chandra Ghosh, Satya Ranjan Bakshi, Ambica Chakraborty and Surya Sen (of Chittagong Armoury Raid fame) and others were aligned with uncle, while Messrs Trailokya Chakravarty (Maharaj), Jnan Majumdar, Rabindra Mohan Sengupta, Amulya Adhikari, and others supported Mr. Sengupta. In Calcutta City itself, the cleavages were very sharp and disputes often led to unpleasant incidents. The Congressmen of North Calcutta, the majority of whom, led by Mr. Rajen Dev and Mr. Hemanta Kumar Basu, were supporters of Mr Sengupta, figured prominently in demonstrations against uncle. Mr. Hemanta Kumar Basu in particular earned considerable notoriety by storming meetings addressed by uncle in the year 1929 He would even go to the length of denying any platform to uncle in North Calcutta and all but wrecked even the purely non-political function of inauguration of the first Bengali Cinema house, *Chitra* in North Calcutta, which uncle had been invited to perform. Several years later both these gentlemen, however, became staunch supporters of uncle and joined the Forward Bloc.

The annual session of the Congress met under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Lahore in December, but he was a mere figurehead, the entire proceedings having been completely dominated by

Mahatma Gandhi. A resolution moved by uncle on behalf of the Left Wing for setting up a parallel Government in the country was defeated. Uncle and Mr Srinivasa Iyengar were also excluded from the Working Committee. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had already been won over by the Mahatma and by advocating independence, he was able to win over some of the other Left Wingers as well. From Bengal, Mr. J. M. Sengupta was taken into the Working Committee though he did not command a majority in the Bengal Congress.

Uncle came back from Lahore defeated, but by no means, depressed. On the contrary, he returned to Calcutta with renewed determination to fight and win. The general atmosphere in the country was in favour of launching a mass civil disobedience movement against the Government, but the leaders of the Congress including Mahatma Gandhi were yet to make up their minds.

CHAPTER FIVE

1930-1932
The Civil Disobedience Movements

After the midnight of the 31st December, 1929, that is, in the early hours of the 1st January, 1930, the flag of independence was hoisted by the President of the Congress at Lahore and the mammoth gathering present at the ceremony took the vow of eternal loyalty to that flag. Mahatma Gandhi was fortunately not long in sensing the atmosphere in the country as a whole and resolved to initiate and lead the national struggle as he thought that "Civil Disobedience alone can save the country from impending lawlessness and secret crime". The first order issued by the Working Committee to that end early in January, 1930, laid down that 26th January should be observed throughout the length and breadth of the country as the day of independence On that day a manifesto embodying a declaration of independence and a pledge of loyalty to the country's fight for its independence was to be read out from every platform and accepted by the people.

The Independence Day celebrations in Calcutta were a great success, execpt that duplicate meetings were held by Congressmen and students under the auspices of their respective groups following upon the split in the Bengal Congress as well as in the students' organization. Uncle was not able to participate in the celebrations as he had a few days ago been convicted of sedition and clapped in prison.

A few weeks earlier, Pandit Motilal Nehru visited Calcutta in order to enquire into the election complaints preferred against the Executive Committee of the Bengal Congress (of which uncle was the President) by the group led by Mr. J. M. Sengupta The enquiry was being held by Pandit Motilal at the house of Dr. B. C. Roy. Father appeared for the Bengal Congress Executive and argued their case before Pandit Motilal. I heard subsequently from Mr. Kiron Sankar Roy that the other side put up a very poor show at the hearing. Pandit Motilal Nehru gave his verdict in favour of Bengal Congress after a few days.

By the beginning of February in the year 1930. the Working Committee vested Mahatma Gandhi with dictatorial powers for conducting the civil disobedience movement. Shortly thereafter, the Mahatma announced that he would start his march from his Ashram at Sabarmati near Ahmedabad to Dandi on the seacoast and after arriving there would launch the civil disobedience movement starting with defying the Salt Law. That would be the signal for the whole country to start the movement As already announced by him, he started the campaign on the 6th April, 1930, and almost simultaneously illegal salt manufacture was begun all over the country. Suited to local conditions, disobedience of other laws was resorted to. In Calcutta, Mr. J. M. Sengupta started disobedience of the law of

sedition by openly reading out seditious literature in a public meeting and was promptly arrested and put in prison.

As stated earlier, uncle had already been in jail when the civil disobedience was started in Calcutta and in other places of Bengal, but the Bengal Congress of which he was the President had already drawn up plans for the campaign on the lines indicated by uncle before his arrest. These plans were given proper shape as per detailed instructions received from uncle at regular intervals from behind the bars. There was strict censorship of letters written by uncle and other prisoners from inside the jail. It was, therefore, out of the question to convey any message, much less instructions, of a political nature through the regular channels. Irregular channels were, therefore, created by uncle to smuggle communications out of and into the prison. Thus, communications of instructions and information continued to flow out and in uninterruptedly throughout the period of uncle's incarceration during the civil disobedience movement.

The Jailor at the Alipore Central Jail where uncle had been detained at the time came under uncle's influence and agreed to pass on uncle's messages and instructions and also arrange for receiving messages meant for uncle from outside the prison and transmit the same to him. Three Anglo-Indian young men, who acted as couriers, used to call at our house in 1, Woodburn Park to deliver or collect messages from or for uncle. From the dress and appearance of those young men, it appeared they were students of the St Xavier's or any other European college, and as I had until recently been a student of the St. Xavier's College and was then studying at the Scottish Church College, their

visits apparently to me were not likely to rouse suspicion on the part of the police informers whose presence around our premises had been a regular feature since the year 1923. It may be seen, therefore, that as early as in the year 1930, uncle had been resorting to revolutionary tactics.

The civil disobedience movement of 1930-31 was chiefly remarkable for the phenomenal awakening it brought about amongst women all over India even of the most orthodox and aristocratic families. Uncle was very keen that women belonging to our family also should not lag behind, but practical difficulties precluded my mother from active participation in the movement. As the leaders had appealed to the students, belonging particularly to colleges and universities to join the movement, both father and uncle felt that there could be no exception in case of our family. Accordingly, about the end of April, 1930, I suspended my studies at the Scottish Church College where I was then a student of the fourth year B.Sc class. The Bengal Provincial Students' Association of which I happened to be a member and on its Executive Committee, formed, soon after, a so-called War Council for conducting the movement.

With the intensification of the movement, the Government became more and more ruthless and resorted to brutal methods for its suppression Instead of the former practice of wholesale arrests of non-violent resisters or *satyagrahis*, the police now started attacking them with iron-shod or leather-covered sticks and many of the volunteers sent by the Bengal Provincial Students' Association and the All Bengal Students' Association to offer *satyagraha* were mercilessly beaten up. Even helpless political prisoners in jails were not spared, one of the most notorious

instances of such an attack having occurred in the Alipore Central Jail in Calcutta in April, 1930. Among those who were attacked were uncle, Mr. J. M. Sengupta, Mr. Kiron Sankar Roy, Mr. Satya Ranjan Bakshi, then Editor of *Liberty*, and others.

In the course of the attack carried out under the direction of the then Superintendent of the Jail, Major S. Dutta, a former physician in the armed services of the Government of India, uncle was thrown down and rendered unconscious for over an hour. An enquiry demanded by the public was refused by the Government. There were other sensational events in April, 1930, notably the Armoury Raid in Chittagong in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) by a group of local revolutionaries some of whom including their leader, Mr. Surya Sen, belonged to the majority party in the local Congress Committee which owed allegiance to uncle in the Bengal Provincial Congress Resignation of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya from the Indian Legislative Assembly and that of Mr. V. J. Patel from the Presidentship of the Assembly also took place about this time.

In June, 1930, efforts were made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar to bring about a settlement between the Government and the Congress, but these proved abortive The civil disobedience movement continued to rage with unabated vigour throughout the year. Uncle continued to be kept in the Alipore Central Jail all through the period and most of the leaders belonging to both the groups in the Bengal Congress as well as youth and student leaders were in the same jail The opportunity was availed of by uncle for holding talks with leaders of the rival groups of students with a view to patching up the differences between them and ultimately to bringing about unity.

It has already been stated before that the split in the Bengal Congress had had its repercussions among the youths and students as well and two rival students' organizations had been functioning under the aegis of the two groups both belonging to the Congress. Most of the top leaders of the All Bengal Students' Association which was allied to the group of Mr. J. M. Sengupta were in Alipore Central Jail in the year 1930, but not all the top leaders of the other students' organization viz., Bengal Provincial Students' Association, owing allegiance to uncle's group had offered themselves for arrest, and some of them were still outside in accordance with the policy adopted by our War Council not to allow all the leaders to march into prison at a time. This policy enabled the B.P.S.A. to carry on with the movement for a much longer period than the other organization, though at a progressively lower tempo.

On uncle's initiative, talks for settlement of of differences between the two rival students' associations and their eventual amalgamation were started As the representative of the leaders of the B.P.S.A. who were out of prison, I was sent for by uncle frequently and had had a number of interviews with him at the Alipore Central Jail where terms of unity were discussed. Uncle was, indeed, very keen on ending the split amongst the students in the first place and urged that the B.P.S.A. should concede one or two points for the sake of bringing about unity. The efforts, however, ultimately ended in failure due to intransigence of some leaders of both the groups, and this, I know, caused uncle keen disapointment.

A settlement was finally arrived at early in the year 1931 between the Congress and the Government and the so-called Delhi Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact was

signed on the 5th March, 1931. The terms of the Pact were not very favourable to the Congress, nevertheless it was accepted, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru being a party to it, which was not unexpected as he had already placed his conscience in the Mahatma's keeping. Following the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, uncle was released from prison on the 8th March. Soon after coming out of jail uncle decided to meet Mahatma personally for a discussion and accordingly accompanied by the veteran ex-revolutionary leader, Mr. Hem Ghosh, he proceeded to Bombay where the Mahatma was at the time.

There had been a series of conferences between uncle and members of his party in 1, Woodburn Park each lasting for hours at a stretch prior to his meeting with the Mahatma. The majority of members, specially the ex-revolutionaries, were extremely hostile to the Pact and were in favour of putting up uncompromising opposition to its acceptance at the Congress session due to be held at Karachi at the end of the month. It is strange to think that the very people who were at the time clamouring for putting up an uncompromising opposition to the Mahatma were nowhere to be seen when uncle gave the call for uncompromising struggle after the Tripuri Congress in 1938.

The year 1931 marked the beginning of rift in the ranks amongst uncle's erstwhile followers. Amongst the ex-revolutionaries, Messrs. Purna Das, Hem Ghosh, Satya Ranjan Bakshi, Haren Ghosh and a few others remained loyal to uncle till the end. The same year also marked the beginning of political realignment of groups and persons not merely in Bengal but all over India. Before uncle left for Bombay to see Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. J. M. Sengupta had called on him one day and was closeted with him for a couple

of hours. Although Mr. Sengupta used to come occasionally to 38/1, Elgin Road and 1, Woodburn Park, he had not been seen in our house since the year 1929 prior to and after the split in the Bengal Congress. His visit to uncle after such a long interval was in connection with the ratification of the Delhi Pact at the Karachi Congress. Mr. Sengupta and his party had already pledged their support to the Mahatma and he tried to persuade uncle to withdraw his opposition to the Pact

Uncle has given a detailed account of the events that preceded and followed the signing of the Delhi Pact in his book* and in which he played a very important role. Pandit Motilal Nehru who had been released from prison in September of the previous year because of grave illness died just before the conclusion of the Delhi Pact and Bhagat Singh and his comrades, Rajguru and Sukdev, convicted of the murder of the notorious police officer, Saunders, who was responsible for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, were executed on the eve of the session of the Congress at Karachi. Pandit Motilal's death at that juncture was a national calamity as it removed the most outstanding intellectual stalwart of the Congress at the time. But Bhagat Singh's death stirred the country to its depths from end to end.

At the Karachi Congress, uncle on behalf of the Left Wing made a statement that they did not approve of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, but that in view of the prevailing circumstances, they would refrain from dividing the house. The Delhi Pact was thus formally ratified by the Congress and shortly thereafter at the meeting of the Working Committee, Mahatma Gandhi was selected as the sole represen-

* *Indian Struggle,* 1920-1934, Chapters Eleven and Twelve.

tative of the Congress at the Round Table Conference. Simultaneously with the Congress, a session of the All India Youth Congress was held in Karachi over which uncle presided. The Youth Congress adopted a very strongly-worded resolution condemning the Delhi Pact. This was followed by other conferences of youth where resolutions expressing disapproval of the Pact were passed. After Karachi Congress, uncle emerged as an All-India leader of the Congress, second only to Mahatma Gandhi himself.

The Congress organization in Bengal continued to remain after the Karachi Congress under uncle's control. This was anathema to the Right Wing of the Congress, the supreme leader of which was Mahatma Gandhi himself and the leader in Bengal, Mr. J. M. Sengupta. As at the Congress session in Lahore in 1929 so at that in Karachi earlier in the year, the majority of delegates from Bengal had voted with uncle. In the elections to the provincial body of the Congress in Bengal, held a few weeks ago, uncle's party had again secured a majority. Naturally, this was intensely disliked by the Gandhi Wing all over India in general and by the Bengal Section led by Mr. Sengupta in particular. Frantic appeals against the results of the election alleging irregular practices, etc., indulged in by the outgoing body, the returning officers and others, went up to the Congress Working Committee and in due course a Court of Enquiry was appointed to investigate into the charges and pronounce judgment. Mr. M. S. Aney constituting the one-man Court of Enquiry was deputed to Calcutta. He had duly initiated the proceedings and was about to get down to serious business, when certain events and their aftermath not only led to the interruption but to eventual abandonment of the enquiry.

At the Hijli Detention Camp, about seventy miles from Calcutta, the armed warders following a misunderstanding with the State prisoners made a surprise attack on the barracks of the latter firing indiscriminately. During the firing, two of the State prisoners, Santosh Mitra and Tarakeswar Sen, were killed and a large number of others seriously injured. On receipt of the tragic news, uncle went down to Hijli, took charge of the dead bodies which were brought to Calcutta and from Howrah Station were carried to the burning ghat in a huge procession and shortly thereafter, a mammoth public meeting was called under the auspices of the Bengal Congress to be presided over by uncle to protest against the firing. Notice of another mammoth meeting to be held under the chairmanship of Mr. J. M. Sengupta appeared in the papers simultaneously.

As soon as uncle's attention had been drawn to the two notices, he took up the telephone and told Mr. Sengupta that he would not allow two meetings to be held for the same purpose and at the same place and that there would be only one meeting which would be presided over by Mr. Sengupta. At the same time he announced his resignation of the office of the President of the Bengal Congress Committee and that of the entire Executive Committee in the interest of unity in the Congress, which was imperative in view of the grave situation facing the province. The statement he issued in resigning office was a most moving document. The meeting was accordingly held in the maidan in Calcutta under the chairmanship of Mr. Sengupta. A message received from the Poet Tagore was read out at the outset and the principal speech of the meeting was delivered by uncle in the course of which he made a most impassioned appeal for unity in the ranks of the Congress. To achieve unity, he

added, he was prepared to sacrifice his all. It was one of the best speeches of uncle I had heard and one could see how his earnestness and candour bewitched the vast audience.

When the entire Congress organization in Bengal was thus offered to Mr Sengupta and his party on a platter, they did not have the boldness to shoulder the burden by themselves but went on wooing the other party to share the responsibility. Mahatma Gandhi left in September to attend the Round Table Conference in London and Mr Sengupta went to England shortly thereafter to recoup his health. The de facto leadership thus remained with uncle though he had offered it to Mr. Sengupta.

In September, 1931, the first annual conference of Bengal Provincial Students' Association was held in Calcutta. The Association though formed in 1929 could not hold any annual session in 1930 because of the civil disobedience movement. We invited Mr. S. Satyamurthi, the most prominent Congress leader of Madras after the retirement of Mr Srinivasa Iyengar to preside over our conference, and uncle to inaugurate the same Both Mr Satyamurthi and uncle in their addresses were extremely critical of the then leadership of the Congress and its politics. The Bengal Provincial Students' Association had a few weeks earlier trounced its rival body, All-Bengal Students' Association, in the election to the council of the Calcutta University Institute and thereby firmly established its hold over the student community of Calcutta. Among those who played prominent roles in the student movement in general and the Bengal Provincial Students' Association were Messrs. Bijoy Singh Nahar, Kumud Bhattacharya (formerly President of the Calcutta Corporation Employees' Union), Abinash

Bhattacharya. Kiron Das (brother of the martyr Jatin Das), Satyanath Majumdar (now Asst. Editor, "Hindusthan Standard of Calcutta), and others.

I successfully passed the Bachelor of Science Examination of the University of Calcutta in 1931 and proceeded to Europe for higher studies in the month of October. I chose Germany as my place of study and both father and uncle approved of my choice most heartily. My father and uncle Subhas as well as uncles, Satish Chandra, Sudhir Chandra, and Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose had completed their education in England. I was the first member of the family to go to Germany for higher education. When I told uncle of my choice, he was unfeignedly glad as he told me that in his heart of hearts he wished my choice were in favour of either France or Germany and that for Heaven's sake it would not fall on England.

From letters and newspapers received by me in Germany from home, it was clear that the Round Table Conference had failed as the British Government doubtless wanted it to fail and that events in India had been leading to a crisis and another showdown with the British Raj was imminent. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India on the 28th December, 1931. The Congress Working Committee met in Bombay on the 29th December and decided to resume civil disobedience in the absence of a satisfactory response from the Government. The Government were in no mood to fulfil the vain hope of the Congress Working Committee and so the negotiations came to an end and decision was taken to resume the civil disobedience movement. Uncle, though not then a member of the Working Committee, had been invited to its meeting.

Uncle Subhas had arrived in Bombay a couple of days earlier to receive Mahatma Gandhi on his return

from Europe. Having met the Mahatma and attended the meeting of the Congress Working Committee, he started on his return journey and boarded the Calcutta-bound mail on the 2nd January, 1932. When after about an hour's run, the train reached Kalyan, uncle was served with an order of arrest under Regulation III of 1818, taken down from his compartment, removed to Seoni Sub-Jail in the then Central Provinces. Just a little over a month thereafter i.e. on the 4th February, father was arrested in Jharia (Bihar) where he had gone to appear in a big case. The Police had the orders for arrest ready beforehand and had only been waiting for the arguments in the case to be concluded. Father was sent straight to Seoni to join uncle there. Within a few weeks of his detention, uncle's health started to deteriorate. Father wrote to me from Seoni Sub-Jail on the 11th March :

> "Subhas's digestion has become very much impaired since the end of January last, solid food does not agree with him. He has therefore to live on Horlicks or chicken soup. I am afraid he will have to continue liquid diet until a thorough examination discloses what the real trouble inside is."

I had written to uncle on my voyage from Bombay to Europe in October, 1931, and then again in February, 1932, after I had settled down to my studies at the Technical University of Munich seeking his advice on the particular subject I should specialize in. He wrote me in reply from Seoni Sub-Jail on the 11th April a four-page letter extracts from which are given below :

> "I duly received the letter you wrote after you left, but I am sorry I did not reply to it. Your recent letter of the 9th Feb. was to hand about

the middle of last month and I have slept over it You have asked me for advice on a matter on which I am hardly competent to advise I can offer only a few remarks for your consideration. You have to remember that the responsibility for making the final decision in any matter affecting you, rests with yourself . . . . I do not know if you are attending lectures on all the subjects under Chemical Technology. Are you doing so? If so, you will get some time to make your final choice regarding specialization. But if you feel a strong desire for specialization in one direction even at the outset—you may follow your own aptitude. If however you are not decided yet in your mind, it would be helpful for you to attend all the lectures in Chemical Technology and you can then hit upon a subject to your taste . . Education in Germany is a privilege in these days. The Germans are reputed for their thoroughness. I hope you will develop this trait in your character while you are there. Learn all that is to be learnt in any subject while you are studying it At the same time, always have India and Indian conditions before your eyes . . . At the University you may come across great men and great scholars from time to time. I hope you will benefit by contact with them. Above all, the European climate will, I hope, do you good I improved considerably in health during my stay in England. I am sorry I could not go to Germany because of the postwar restrictions and I could only visit France. But you are more lucky."

On the 30th May, 1932, both father and uncle were taken down to Jubbulpore for medical examination. Father wrote to me on the 6th of June from that place :

"Subhas' stomach troubles (pain, etc.) had become very acute since the 22nd May and were accompanied by high fever. Since the 29th May,

> he has been a little better. He was x-rayed here yesterday and at the British Military Hospital and attempt is being made to diagnose the disease. But I gather that there are no arrangements here for detecting gall bladder troubles. It may therefore be necessary to take him elsewhere for further examination."

Father wrote further:

> "I wish the medical examination had taken place in Calcutta; for in that case, we could have the advice of men like Sir Nilratan Sircar and Dr. Lalit Mohan Banerji. But we have no choice in the matter"

A few weeks later—on the 18th July—father wrote to me from Jubbulpore that

> "Subhas was taken to Nagpur on Saturday last (that is on the 16th July) at about 9 A M enroute for Madras. The orders of Government were to send him to the Penitentiary (Borstal Institution) at Madras; and when he reaches there, arrangements will be made for his further examination and for treatment in a hospital at Madras We don't know in which hospital he will be treated. The right thing would have been to send him to Calcutta for examination and treatment; but of course, it is idle to expect Government to do the right thing."

After a good many representations, both written and verbal, the Government at last permitted Sir Nilratan Sircar and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy to examine uncle at Madras. They recommended that uncle should either be released or sent to a Sanatorium for proper treatment without delay. On the 8th October, he was sent to the Bhowali Sanatorium in U.P. from Madras.

In the month of September, the Indian community abroad were greatly stirred by the "fast unto death"

undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi on the 20th of that month to force the British Government to withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the so-called depressed classes among the Hindu community. The fast was given up by the Mahatma on the 26th September after an agreement had been arrived at by the Hindu leaders doing away with separate electorates for the depressed classes and the British Government had agreed to accept that agreement The fast, however, had a very unfortunate effect in Europe in general and in England in particular. I was spending my long University vacation in England in September, 1932, and could see how the British propagandists were taking advantage of the opportunity of giving a distorted picture of the whole episode. Most of the newspapers and periodicals in that country tried to make out that the Mahatma had fasted as he was against granting certain rights to the depressed classes Also, the fast served to magnify the problem of untouchability. In Germany, the facts presented by the press were presented in a manner so naive as to verge on the ludicrous. But the more serious unfortunate effect of the fast was that it served to sidetrack the civil disobedience movement.

From Bhowali, uncle wrote to me on the 27th October, 1932 :

C/o The Superintendent
King Edward Sanatorium
Bhowali, U P

"My dear Asoke,

I was happy to receive your letter of the 29th September from Oxford. I was glad that you were spending the vacation in England How did you like Cambridge ?

What you say about the English cities is quite true

It is necessary and desirable that you should make the most of your stay in Europe and learn as much as possible At the same time you will have to remember in common with all Indians, that outside India, every Indian is India's un-official ambassador. His country will be judged by foreigners according to the impression that he is able to make on them.

I left Jubbulpore for Madras about the middle of July last There (at Madras) I had to undergo X-Ray and other forms of examination I left Madras on the 8th October for Bhowali for treatment here. As at present arranged, I shall be here for a month and a half. This Sanatorium will be closed on the 15th December for the winter recess.

I have been feeling more cheerful here and a little better But progress will, I am afraid, be slow. The Sanatorium staff are doing their best for me.

Hope this will find you quite well. My Bijoya love

Yours very affectionately
Subhas

"P. S. You did not mention your address and I don't remember it I am therefore sending this letter home to be despatched from there"

The climate of Bhowali and treatment at the Sanatorium there did not, however, benefit uncle Father wrote to me from Jubbulpore Jail on the 5th December, 1932.

"We expected Subhas would improve at Bhowali but, unfortunately, that has not been the case. Sir Nilratan Sircar and Sunil* will examine him to-day at Bhowali The Bhowali Sanatorium will close down on the 15th of this month and Subhas will have to be sent somewhere else. I

*Dr Sunil Chandra Bose—a leading Cardiologist and another uncle of the writer

> believe the choice of a place will depend to some extent on the medical report. The best thing undoubtedly would be to send him to Europe for treatment. But past experience does not justify us in expecting so much consideration at the hands of Government"

The Medical Board at Bhowali recommended that uncle be sent to Calcutta Medical College with a view to his being sent to Europe for treatment. But the Government sent him to Balarampur Hospital at Lucknow instead. The place did not suit him at all and his health started going down rapidly.

Outside, the civil disobedience movement though still on was definitely on the wane with the Government gradually getting the better of the Congress.

CHAPTER SIX

1933-1936
In Europe

The year 1933 opened on a very depressing note. News from home was bad in every respect. The civil disobedience movement had almost fizzled out and those Congressmen who had remained outside prison were more concerned with anti-untouchability campaign than the civil disobedience movement. Uncle who had been brought down to Lucknow from the Bhowali Sanatorium in December in the previous year continued to remain as a patient in the Balarampur Hospital, awaiting Government of India's decision on the matter of his further treatment. About the middle of January, the Government of India, based on the recommendation of the Civil Surgeon of Lucknow, Lt Col. Buckley, made an offer to uncle permitting him to proceed to Europe for treatment at his own expense. They, however, refused to set uncle at liberty so long as he was in India or to allow his family to take charge of his treatment at home. An

offer more or less on similar lines was made to uncle about sixteen years ago—in 1926, when he had been dangerously ill in Burmese prisons—except that this time the Government did not attach any condition to his return home after recovery, which was the most objectionable feature of the last offer and led to its rejection by him as it aimed at making him an exile for an indefinite period.

Uncle himself had been very keen on going to Europe not merely with a view to availing himself of the chance of consulting the best specialists and placing himself under their treatment for a lasting cure of the malady which had been plaguing him during the last two years, but to have the opportunity of studying at first hand the international situation in general and the conditions in post-Versailles Europe in particular and, furthermore, to rouse interest in India and establish proper contacts with men who really counted in the politics of modern Europe Until then practically very little had been done in that behalf except by the late V. J. Patel, the renowned Swarajist leader and ex-President, Indian Legislative Assembly, who was one of the very few leaders interested in foreign propaganda. All this, uncle felt, made his visit to Europe indispensably necessary. He, therefore, conveyed his acceptance of the offer made by the Government But the refusal of the Government to bear even a part of the expenses for uncle's treatment in Europe posed the problem of raising necessary funds for the passage to and treatment in Europe specially because of father's enforced absence in jail.

Moreover, detailed negotiations regarding certain arrangements preliminary to uncle's departure for Europe had to be carried on with the Government of

India in Delhi. Uncle thereupon insisted that somebody of the family or, failing that, a representative of the family, should come for an interview with him at Lucknow in the first place for necessary instructions and thereafter proceed to Delhi and see the Home Minister or the Home Secretary with a view to finalizing matters. I heard from my mother that uncle had sent a frantic telegram from Balarampur Hospital at Lucknow to that effect and suggested the names of Messrs. P. C Basu[1], N. C. Mitra[2] and Ajit Kumar Dey[3] as representatives on behalf of the family in the event of mother being unable to come. Thereupon, my mother herself went to Lucknow, had an interview with uncle, and proceeded thence to Delhi where she saw the Home Secretary, Sir Maurice Hallet. The late Satyendra Chandra Mitra, who was then a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly in Delhi was of great help to mother in arranging for the interview, and his participation in the talks she had had with the Home Secretary enabled her to secure a few concessions in the matter of interview of relations with uncle, prior to his departure for Europe, uncle's journey from Lucknow, etc., etc

Uncle sailed from Bombay on the 23rd February 1933, by the Lloyd Triestino boat, *s. s. Gange.* Orders for his unconditional release were served on him after he had boarded the steamer Prior to his sailing for Europe, uncle issued the following moving and poi-

1) The late Mr. P. C Basu, Barrister-at-Law, a great and sincere friend of our family.
2) Mr N. C. Mitra, Solicitor to the Government of West Bengal, for about the last thirty years, also a great and sincere friend of our family.
3) Mr Ajit Kumar Dey, maternal uncle of the writer, who was sincerely devoted to uncle.

gnant statement exclusively to the Free Press of India. which was published in all the important newspapers throughout India on the 24th February.

"On the eve of my departure for Europe, I desire to convey my cordial and affectionate thanks to my friends and well-wishers all over the country for the kind interest they have taken in me.

"In spite of my prostrate condition the Government for reasons best known to themselves did not consider it advisable to release me or allow me freedom of any kind so long I remained in any part of India They also did not permit me to meet my aged and sick parents in spite of the most importunate requests.

"Nevertheless I feel that what facilities have reluctantly been allowed by the Government have been the direct result of ceaseless agitation carried on by my friends and well-wishers all over the country and by the nationalist press in particular. To them my sincere gratitude is due

"The Public are aware that though the responsibility for the present condition of my health falls entirely on the Government, they have refused to arrange for my treatment in Europe at Government expense, while they also refused to allow my friends and relatives to take charge of my treatment in India

"In view of the financial troubles through which my relatives have been passing for over a year, due primarily to the incarceration of my elder brother, Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose, it would have been impossible for me to accept the offer of the Government. But some of my friends and well-wishers have voluntarily taken upon themselves the responsibility of finding funds necessary for my stay and treatment in Europe and have made it possible for me to go out to Europe in search of health.

"It is yet too early for me to say whether I shall

be able to recover my former health. But whatever the future may have in store for me, I heartily thank all those who have made it possible for me to leave for Europe.

"Acutely sensitive though I am. I have not hesitated to accept the help offered by my friends and well-wishers, because I have always felt that my family is not confined to my blood relations but is coterminous with my country and when I have once for all dedicated my humble life to the service of my country my countrymen have as much right to look after my welfare as my nearest relatives have.

"I only hope and pray that God in his infinite mercy may make me worthy in the same measure of love and affection that has been showered on me by all sections of the Indian community.

"In spite of all restrictions imposed on me till the moment of my sailing, I feel I am carrying the kindest thoughts, best wishes and the most affectionate sympathy of my countrymen

"I desire, therefore, to assure them in return that their thoughts and prayers will be the most potent factor in helping my recovery (if it is not too late already)—a factor much more efficacious than the best medicines which the best doctors in the world can prescribe."

Among numerous friends and well-wishers who offered and extended their generous help, the names of Kumar Debendralal Khan of Narajole and Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar deserve special mention. Kumar Debendralal Khan had been a loyal co-worker of uncle in the political field. Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar was, on the other hand, a political opponent or could be regarded as such and was then occupying the post of the Law Member of the Government of India. Nevertheless, he had great affection and personal regard for uncle.

The steamer carrying uncle was expected to arrive at Venice on the 6th March, 1933, and it was arranged that he would disembark at that port and thence proceed by train to Vienna. The world-wide reputation of Vienna as a centre of medical studies and treatment and the recommendation of our own medical advisers had made him choose that place

I was at the time studying at the Technical University in Munich, Germany, and was naturally very keen on meeting uncle. I was, therefore, overjoyed on receiving in the last week of February father's letter of the 9th February, 1933, from Jubbulpore Jail suggesting to me to go down to the port of disembarkation to meet uncle He wrote :

> "Do you think you can get away from Munich for four or five days.? Subhas will no doubt feel happy to see you at Trieste (or such other port where he will land) You will have to ascertain definitely where *s s Gange* will discharge her passengers "

Almost simultaneously I got my mother's letter confirming that uncle would disembark at Venice and not at Trieste which was the terminal port and asking me to make arrangements for meeting uncle there Accordingly, I reached Venice on the 5th March, fixed up accommodation for uncle at *Royale Danielli*, one of the leading hotels there and situated near the Grand Canal, and made other necessary arrangements for his stay overnight in Venice and journey to Vienna on the day following, that is the 7th March

When *s. s. Gange* touched at Brindisi, the first Italian port, on the 5th March, a telegram from the Hindusthan Association of Italy (the organization of Indians in Italy) was delivered to uncle on board the steamer welcoming him to Europe and wishing

him speedy recovery. The vessel arrived at Venice on the 6th March as per schedule. Almost immediately after the boat had berthed at the port, the Manager of the Lloyd Tristino line boarded the steamer to receive uncle. It was reported that instructions had been received from the highest circles of the Italian Government in Rome to see to uncle's comforts and afford him all possible assistance. The usual customs formalities were accordingly dispensed with in his case.

The leading newspapers and journals of Italy like *Popolo D'Italia*, *Popolo Di Roma*, *Observatore Romano*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and others, sent their special correspondents to Venice to interview uncle. They called at the *Royale Danielli* Hotel soon after his arrival. In the course of his interview with them, uncle said that he had come to Europe primarily for treatment and in quest of health. But wherever and in whatever state he may be, independence of India remained the supreme goal of his life and to that end and to ensure that India's demand for independence and that her hopes and aspirations and ideals received due recognition, he would always, he added, be prepared to strive to his utmost

Amongst uncle's fellow-passengers on board the steamer were two physicians, Dr. S. N. Sen and Dr. N. G. Moitra, both of whom had looked after him well during the voyage Curiously enough there was another gentleman—a lawyer by profession—who appeared to be a personification of courtesy and extremely obliging to him, but who, I learned subsequently, was in reality an agent of the Government of India, one of the objects of whose voyage and trip to Europe being to keep watch on uncle's activities on board the ship and listen in to his conversations with fellow-passengers, and report them to proper quarters. This gentleman

offered to travel with uncle to Vienna in order, as he said, to be at his service, although he had not been to Europe before and did not know a word of the German language. Uncle, however, managed to shake him off at Venice He told me in that connection that he had been accosted by another person, who ostensibly was an active Congressman of Central Calcutta, but really a notorious police informer, during his journey from Jubbulpore Jail to Bombay port, and who would not leave him till the sailing of the ship. The Government of India was so very solicitous about him that they considered it their duty, he added, to watch over him all the time.

Uncle rested the day in Venice. As he felt somewhat less fatigued after the sea-voyage, we went out in the afternoon for a short sight-seeing trip on a motor boat. In the course of our long conversation, he briefly narrated to me the events in India since November, 1931. When he met Mahatma Gandhi in Bombay in December, 1931, on the latter's return from the Round Table Conference, the Mahatma, he said, enquired of him of the situation in Bengal and remarked that he had been told by a prominent Bengal leader that he, meaning uncle, was a spent force Uncle said he replied to the Mahatma that history would prove who was a spent force He related to me, further, that after he had decided to go to Europe he had had Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi approached on his behalf with the request for letters of introduction to eminent persons in Europe. The Mahatma had declined to give any such letter and the one which the Poet had been pleased to give was not found worth very much Uncle thereupon decided to move about Europe on his own without any introduction from anybody.

We left Venice for Vienna on the 7th March and arrived there on the 8th in the morning. The Indian community in Vienna turned up almost to a man to accord him a most cordial welcome. The majority of Indian students then residing in Vienna were engaged in higher studies or specializing in particular branches of medicine and most of them came forward to offer their help and assistance to uncle. Among them the names of Dr. Sharma, Dr. Katyar and Dr. Gairola may be specially mentioned. There were a few others like Dr. P. K. Bose* and Messrs. M. Mathur and S. Singh studying other subjects, who were of assistance to the same extent. We put up at the *Hotel Meissl und Schaden* on our arrival in Vienna and spent the first few days there. News of uncle's arrival in Vienna spread in a few hours and brought representatives of the Press, both national and international, in endless stream. Though curiously enough, the Austrian Correspondent of *Reuters*, Mr. Scholefield, was not amongst the early callers, he could not ignore uncle's presence in Vienna and subsequently became one of the regular visitors to uncle's apartments.

Almost immediately after his arrival in Vienna, uncle was examined by leading specialists, both physicians and surgeons, and on their recommendation was removed after a few days to a nursing home—Sanatorium Dr. Fuerth—for proper observation and treatment The consensus of opinion among the specialists was that the seat of trouble was in the abdomen—in fact, uncle's main complaint at the time was intense pain in the abdomen which persisted in varying degrees all the time. It was therefore a matter of real relief to be told that no dangerous symptoms had been found

*Formerly of University College of Science and the Bose Institute and now Scientist Emeritus.

in the lungs or respiratory organs.

Within a couple of days of uncle's transfer to Sanatorium Dr. Fuerth, the well-known Austrian writer and critic, Mr. Rene Fueloep-Miller, and his wife called on uncle to make his acquaintance. Mr. Fueloep-Miller had made his name by two of his books viz. (1) Lenin and Gandhi and (2) Mind and Face of Bolshevism. Thereafter, the couple, and particularly, Mrs Fueloep-Miller, used to visit uncle at regular intervals to enquire after his health and were immensely helpful in various ways Mr. & Mrs Fueloep-Miller were well-known figures in the literary and artist circles of Vienna. Besides, they and specially, Mrs Fueloep-Miller, had good contacts with the leaders of almost all the political parties of Austria and their wives and friends, either directly or through mutual friends. With the help of Mrs. Fueloep-Miller and subsequently with that of another influential couple, Mr. & Mrs Vetter, uncle was able to establish personal contacts with leaders and leading figures in the political and social life in Austria including the leader of the Communist Party.

Since the break-up of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire after the end of the first world war, Austria had been a small republic with a population of only a little over six million out of which two million were inhabitants of the city of Vienna itself The ruling party of the State then were the Christian Socialists with Dr Dollfuss as the Chancellor (Prime Minister). The Corporation of the city of Vienna, on the other hand, was dominated by the Social Democratic Party with Mr. Karl Seitz as the Mayor. The National Socialist Party of the country, which was a tremendous force to reckon with and which wanted a union with Germany, was then under partial ban. This party had their own private army trained in and

heavily financed from Germany. To counteract this as well as to overawe the Social Democrats who dominated the city of Vienna, Dollfuss set up his own private army under the name and style of *Heimwehr* (Home Army) under the leadership of Prince Starhemberg and Major Fey Uncle was invited to watch the parade of the *Heimwehr* on the occasion of the celebration of the Day of 'Victory' against Turks and was much impressed by their turn-out Dr. Dollfuss was later assassinated by the National Socialists in their abortive attempt to capture power by force in 1934 and the *Heimwehr* played a notable part in defeating the coup at the time

Within two weeks of his setting foot in Europe, uncle decided to learn the German lagnguage properly and set apart some little time every day for the purpose, in spite of acute illness and multifarious work. He picked up a working knowledge of the language within a very short time. Later on, during World War II, he was able to attain proficiency in the language and to carry on conversation and discussion in German without the help of an interpreter and could even deliver speeches in correct and elegant German During the period 1942-43 of the Second World War, he delivered speeches in the German language in various places of Germany and many of us in India had the opportunity of listening in to those speeches over the German or Azad Hind Radio stations

After about two weeks' stay in Vienna, I returned to Munich. Thereafter, I used to go and spend my holidays with him and also visited him in between the vacations whenever necessary I was naturally in constant touch with uncle by means of correspondence and occasionally over the telephone In spite of ill-health and other preoccupations, uncle remained an

indefatigable correspondent. He wrote to me either in Bengali or English as it suited him.

From March, 1933 onwards, after the capture of power by the National Socialists in Germany, the British Press in general became extremely vociferous in their denunciation of 'Nazi' oppression. In connection with the above, extracts from uncle's letter dated the 5th April, 1933, written to me in Bengali[1] are given below:

> "Dr. Lauda came yesterday. He did not say anything new. Enquiries are being made for lodgings. None has been found so far.
>
> "A paper is published by the 'Nazis'[2] there (Munich) I am thinking of sending a letter to the Editor of the paper in 2/3 days I shall write therein—the British Press and the British politicians are making a lot of propaganda on the conditions in Germany. But when the British Government use repressive measures in India, they remain silent. I do not know whether they will publish my letter Do you know anybody who can put in a word to the authorities of the paper in that behalf? If you do, you may inform him beforehand I shall send the letter in German in the course of the next 2/3 days."

As indicated, uncle sent a letter to the official organ of the Nazi Party in Germany, *Voelkischer Beobachter,* which used to be published in Munich, but the letter was not published in its columns. In accordance with the policy enunciated by the party leader, Adolf Hitler, in his book, *Mein Kampf,* the party had on assumption of power decided to take up a pro-British as against an anti-French line, not merely in the

1) The English rendering of letters written in Bengali is by the writer.

2) The abbreviated form by which the National Socialist Party was then known.

matter of foreign policy but in the cultural spheres as well and would not entertain any propaganda which might be regarded as anti-British.

At home in India, the Government of India after long representations, at last agreed to transfer father from Jubbulpore Jail to Kurseong and permitted him to live in his own house at Giddapahar near Kurseong in internment. He was accordingly sent there towards the end of April, 1933.

In the meantime, a group of well-meaning persons with pronounced sympathy for the cause of Indian independence headed by a Danish lady of the name of Madame E. Horup had recently founded an organization under the name and style of "International Committee for India" with its office in Geneva (Switzerland) with the object of advocating the case for India's independence. The Committee used to publish a 4-page mimeographed bulletin every week containing concise articles and important items of news on and from India. Apart from a number of Europeans sympathetic to India's aspirations, the Committee had already enlisted the support of Dr. Tarak Nath Das and Mr. V. J. Patel, and recently, of uncle as well. On the 5th May, 1933, uncle wrote to me as follows:

> "I have received all your letters and I am sorry I have not been able to reply. I heard your voice quite distinctly over the phone this afternoon.
>
> "Please send *Liberty** to Madame E. Horup, Honorary Secretary, International pour L'Inde, Boulevard des Tranchees 46', Geneva, Suisse.
>
> "Please send them regularly to her every week as soon as you finish reading. If they send Madame Horup the paper from Calcutta you can then stop sending her the paper.
>
> "I am a little better than before."

*The daily newspaper published from Calcutta

Early in May, uncle moved out from the Sanatorium Fuerth as he was feeling a little better. He then took up residence at the *Hotel de France* situated in Schottenring, one of the principal thoroughfares of Vienna. The hotel thereafter continued to be his principal residence in Vienna till 1936 except for a few months in the year 1935. He was very keen on visiting Germany, but the difficulty was that his passport had not been endorsed for Germany by the Government of India. The passport contained endorsement for visiting only France, Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, but not the United Kingdom or Germany. In those days no visa was required for a visit to Germany but endorsement on the passport to that effect was necessary. I asked uncle one day as to what he thought was the reason for exclusion of Germany from the list of "approved countries", since post-Versailles Germany had neither been a communist state nor a centre of any anti-imperialist movement. He said he was not quite certain about the reason behind such exclusion, but he had heard from circles close to the British Labour Party that even in the year 1926 when the offer was made to him in Mandalay Jail to go to Switzerland, it was decided that he would not be permitted to visit Germany and that the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, had left a note in his file to that effect. Uncle's attending physicians in Vienna recommended a course of treatment at the famous watering place, Bad Wildbad in Black Forest in Germany, and on the strength thereof he applied to the India Office in London for passport to visit Germany. In reply to his application, the India Office informed him that in view of the recommendation of his medical advisers they may allow uncle to go to Germany. Uncle wrote to me on the 10th May, "Just

received letter from India Office that they may allow me to go to Germany. I have to apply to the British Consul-General here".

On the 17th May, uncle wrote to me to say, "The Mayor of Vienna invited me to meet him at the *Rathaus** the other day. I shall send you an issue of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* containing something about me". On the 19th May, he wrote to me. "I have got the passport for Germany after all. I shall however stay on here for 3 weeks or so".

As stated already, the city of Vienna was under the control of the Socialists and remained so for well-nigh twelve years before being superseded by force by the State Government. During their regime, the Socialists abolished slums, built beautiful tenements for workers and extended civic amenities in every way, which not only restored the pre-war reputation of Vienna as the 'city beautiful' but made it the envy of Europe in many respects Uncle was given the opportunity of studying the achievements of the municipal authorities in great detail

The same month Mr V. J. Patel, returned to Vienna after concluding his tour in U.S.A In spite of his weak health, uncle went to the railway station to receive him. I was then in Vienna and accompanied uncle Mr. Patel appeared to be in very poor health and exhausted by the journey so much so that he could hardly walk up to the waiting car. He put up at the *Hotel De France* where uncle had been staying but had to be removed soon after to a nursing home for observation and treatment Uncle wrote to me on the 28th May as follows

> "I have not decided about my moves yet In the meantime the London Indians have elected me

*The German equivalent for municipal buildings

the President of Indian Political Conference to be held on the 10th and 11th June in London. I asked for the passport to England at the British Consulate but they declined I have asked friends in London to try for the passport but I am doubtful if I shall get the passport. If I do, then I shall go to London for a few days.

"Mr. Patel is in *Sanatorium Himmelhof* here He is better there but the progress is very slow. He has got 'heart trouble' complications.

"I am making steady progress. The pain comes on almost daily but it is not so bad as before. I am therefore able to move about to some extent."

The British Government, however, did not give him permission to go to England. He, therefore, sent his address to be read out at the Conference. In this remarkable address, he appealed to the Indian residents there to undertake a critical study of the situation in India in the light of changes taking place in the world and also positive and intelligent propaganda in favour of India. Further, he placed the proposal of formation of a new party named 'Samyabadi Sangha' within the Congress for spearheading the task of liberating India from the British yoke.

A few days earlier Mahatma Gandhi had been released from prison following a fast the object of which was to bring about a change of heart in his countrymen who were responsible for the unfortunate plight of the untouchables. Soon after the Mahatma had been set at liberty, the civil disobedience movemnt was suspended by the Congress on the 'recommendation' of the former Uncle and Mr. V. J. Patel thereupon issued a manifesto from Vienna condemning the Mahatma's decision. The manifesto, further, stated that the decision signified a failure of the civil disobedience movement and also Mahatma Gandhi's

leadership and urged that it was time to turn to a more radical policy and leadership. The manifesto was not, however, received with acclamation except by a very small section and was even criticized by many as outrageous.

Towards the end of June, 1933, uncle moved out of Vienna for the first time since his arrival in that city and went first of all to Czechoslovakia. On the 30th June, he wrote to me from Prague. I quote the relevant extracts from his letter :

> "I arrived here yesterday from Vienna by aeroplane. It took us 1½ hours, but I did not enjoy the flight as the plane was not moving at the same level and it made me feel somewhat giddy
>
> "I intend remaining here for 8 days or so. I have not settled my further programme yet. I shall let you know as soon as I decide You can write to people at home that I have come here
>
> "I shall visit the Skoda Works (2 hours' run by train from Prague) on Tuesday next. Bata works have also invited me, but I do not know if I shall be able to go there. I shall visit glass and some other factories on Friday next.
>
> "I am fairly well—though not free from pain yet."

From Prague uncle proceeded to Warsaw in Poland nd arrived there on the 10th July, 1933. He wrote to ne on the 11th July from Warsaw to say that he would tay there for 7 or 8 days and thence proceed to erlin. His original intention was to go to Moscow om Warsaw, but the Soviet Government for reasons est known to them did not grant him the necessary sa. On reaching Berlin on the 17th July, he wrote me at length. The relevant extracts from his letter e given below :

"Your letter of the 13th reached me this morning at Warsaw just as I was leaving for Berlin . .

"My visits to Prag and to Warsaw were successful and I was able to do some useful work At Warsaw I was alone, but at Prague I had an Indian friend. I have not had much difficulty in moving about as the authorities at Prague and at Warsaw were kind towards me and made arrangements regarding my programme, tour, etc . . .

"I intend to visit Munich on my way to Vienna from here. If so, I shall let you know in good time, and shall come before the 15th August As at present arranged, I shall be here for about ten days"

Towards the end of July, news was received by us of the sudden and tragic death of Mr J M Sengupta of apoplexy at Ranchi in Bihar where he was in internment under Regulation III of 1818 Mr Sengupta had been at the height of his popularity at the time of his death.

In Berlin uncle felt unwell and was obliged to extend his stay there. He wrote to me on the 2nd August :

"I was unwell for a fortnight after coming here. From yesterday I have been feeling better I have just started looking round Berlin I met the Mayor yesterday and will be visiting the municipal works during the next week Mr. Patel has left Vienna for Francisbad (?) / Franzenbad in Czechoslovakia and I may not therefore go to Vienna at present I shall let you know about my programme as soon as I decide Harish will be reaching Munich about the 14th August and will stay for a week Please arrange to prolong your stay at Munich, so that you may be there as long as

Harish[1] is there. I shall meet Harish either at Munich or in Berlin—if he comes here.

"Please let me know the name and address of a good 2nd class Hotel at Munich"

Germany in 1933 was not altogether a pleasant country to reside in for Indians or, for that matter, the so-called 'coloured races' The National Socialist Party after coming to power in Germany in March of that year started a campaign of hate against Jews and at the same time of slander against coloured races including Indians dubbing them as 'inferior' people. Hitler in his book, *Mein Kampf* published a few years earlier had made derogatory references to India. In 1933 after assumption of power by the Nazi Party, one of its leaders, Alfred Rosenberg,[2] who subsequently became a Minister of the Government wrote a pamphlet which contained among others insulting references to Indians

The Indian students' organizations in Munich and Berlin drew uncle's attention to the offensive passages in Rosenberg's pamphlet and sought his intervention with the authorities On that subject, uncle wrote to me from Berlin on the 12th August:

"The pamphlet you sent me reached my hands some time ago I was tackling the authorities here over the statements of Herr Hitler and Dr. Rosenberg—but so far I have had no result If you people in Munich want to do something in the

1) The late Dr Harish Chandra Sinha, Professor of Banking, University of Calcutta Dr Sinha, who happened to be a great friend and contemporary of uncle during his college days was a brilliant scholar in Mathematics and later on in Banking He was closely associated with uncle in the management of "Forward."

2) Sentenced to death by the Allied Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and executed

matter—I have no objection I think we could agitate in the Indian Press . Friends here are also agitated and they are talking of boycott The rank and file, however, do not hold the views of the leaders"

From Berlin uncle did not come to Munich as he had originally intended, but went to Franzensbad, the famous watering place in Czechoslovakia, where Mr. V. J Patel was taking a cure. From Franzensbad uncle wrote to me on the 30th August that he and Mr Patel would both go to Vienna and that after spending a few days there, he would proceed to Wildbad in Black Forest stopping in Munich on the way. However, he was obliged to alter his plans once again and to go to Geneva in Switzerland instead to attend a conference on India arranged to be held there under the auspices of the International Committee for India a reference to which has been made earlier in this book.

From a sanatorium in Gland near Geneva, uncle wrote to me on the 28th September

"The India Conference on the 19th instant was a fair success and we had a crowded public meeting in the evening"

The letter, however, contained grievous news. Uncle added :

"Mr. Patel after coming from Geneva had a serious breakdown accompanied with heart trouble and had to be removed to this sanatorium His condition since the 23rd instant has been critical and no one can say if he will survive this attack. Everything possible is being done to save his life I have been with him day and night for the last four days. This place is an hour's run from Geneva"

In spite of the best possible treatment and nursing, Mr. Patel's life could not be saved and he died on the

22nd October, 1933 In accordance with his last wishes, Mr Patel's body was to be sent to Bombay for cremation there.

Uncle thereupon immediately telephoned to the Indian Students' Association in Rome to try to make arrangement with Lloyd Triestino Shipping Lines, then very popular with the Indians, for carrying the coffin containing Mr. Patel's remains to India Also, he asked Mr. Amiya Nath Sarkar,* the leader of the Indian Community in Italy to proceed to Brindisi to meet Mr Gordhanbhai Patel, a nephew of the late Mr V J Patel, who was due to arrive in Europe by air to render him all necessary assistance However, in spite of all efforts on the part of the Indian students and the good offices of Baron Ricciardi, a member of the Italian Parliament, and Countess Carnevale, widow of Admiral Carnevale, who were great friends of India, the negotiations with Lloyd Triestino proved abortive and the coffin had to be ultimately sent by the P & O mail boat, *s s Narkunda* from Marseilles Uncle wrote to me from Marseilles on the 26th October as follows

> "You must have heard of the death of Mr Patel by now
>
> "I arrived here last night with the dead body from Gland The body has been put on board *s s Narkunda.* The boat will reach Bombay on the 9th November and the cremation will take place there
>
> "I am leaving for Geneva tomorrow and shall stay there for the present"

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*A nephew of the famous historian, the late Jadunath Sarkar, who was than a student in Rome He had later had a distinguished career in the profession of insurance in India

From Marseilles, uncle returned to Geneva and then about the middle of November went to Nice in the French Riviera where he stayed till the end of December. While in Nice, uncle took a course of water cure, that is, he used to drink the medicated water of the famous French Spa, Vichy On the 12th December uncle wrote to me from Nice, extracts from which are given below:

> "Your letter of the 9th.
>
> "I am not sure if I shall be coming to Munich. I am not decided yet—but most probably I shall not come now I do not want to leave the sunny south, where I have improved to some extent .
>
> "I am also being tempted to go to Rome for the X' mas The Indian students conference is meeting there on the 22nd December and the Oriental Institute is also going to be opened formally. The Italian railways will (I hear) make travelling free for all who come to Rome on the occasian of the Conference
>
> "Have you received any invitation for the Conference at Rome? If so, is anybody from Munich going to attend the Conference?
>
> "A Nazi friend of mine from Berlin Dr. Frank—will be visiting Munich in the X' mas vacation He wanted your address and I have given him.
>
> "He is a lecturer (or Dozent) in the Technische Hochschule of Berlin and is strongly pro-Indian Personally I found him to be a very nice and dependable man You will like meeting him
>
> "By the way—as a result of the representation I made in Berlin, Mr Nambiar's* expulsion order has been withdrawn and he has visited Berlin You will remember that he was expelled early this

*Mr A. C. N Nambiar, who was second in command to Netaji in Germany during 1941-43 and later on Ambassador of India in Switzerland after independence

> year on the report that he was a Communist They will also compensate him liberally for the loss of his personal belongings when he was in custody."

Dr Lothar Frank could not come to Munich during Christmas in 1933 and also I was away in Rome at the time to attend the meetings of Oriental and Indian students I met him, however, subsequently in Berlin when I visited the city and had very interesting discussions with him. He belonged to the Left Wing of the National Socialist Party, that is he believed in socialism and did not merely pay lip service to the principle for which he paid the penalty later Dr Frank came out to India in 1970 and gave an address on the occasion of the Netaji Jayanti Celebrations at the Netaji Bhavan on the 23rd January, 1970.

Indian students' organizations all over Europe including ours in Munich were invited by the Italian Government and a very large contingent of Indian students from Germany visited Rome. Apart from free travelling from the Italian frontier to Rome, the Italian Government made excellent arrangements for board and lodging and sight-seeing for all the delegates, not only Indians, but other Asians, free of cost to the delegates and also issued free passes to them for travel throughout Italy.

Italy occupied a place of very great importance in the programme of his activities during uncle's sojourn in Europe in the 'thirties. Apart from the fact that he did not have the opportunity of visiting the country of Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour during his first visit to Europe in 1919-21, the compelling reason for going there was that the then Government of Italy had come out openly in support of India's struggle for independence. The most eloquent testimony to this was the interview, the head of that Government, Signor Musso-

lini, had with Mahatma Gandhi in the previous year on his way back to India after the abortive Round Table Conference in London, in the course of which the former conveyed his best wishes for success of the freedom movement in India This was in sharp contrast to Hitler's Germany which prior to the second world war was reluctant to annoy the British as a matter of policy.

The friendly attitude shown by the Italian officials at the time of uncle's disembarkation in Venice early that year, no doubt, under instructions from the capital, and the euologistic references to him in the Italian press at the time were appreciated by uncle When, therefore, a cordial invitation on behalf of the Italian Government was sent to him at Nice to visit Rome and participate in the inauguration of the Institute, he was pleased to accept the same He arrived in Rome in the last week of December and was put up at the best hotel in Rome viz *Excelsior*.

The Oriental Institute in Rome was inaugurated by Mussolini himself who delivered the inaugural address successively in three languages—Italian, French and English—himself He ridiculed Rudyard Kipling's theory "The East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet". This was followed by a Congress of Oriental Students in Europe, which was attended by fairly large contingents of Arab, Chinese, Israeli, Indian, and Iranian (who later on withdrew from the assembly on the plea that they were not 'Orientals') students from all over Europe. The Congress was followed by the establishment of a Confederation of Oriental Students in Europe with its permanent bureau in Rome Mr Amiya Nath Sarkar of India and Miss Lieo of China were elected Joint Secretaries of the Permanent Bureau The bureau used to publish a

quarterly journal entitled JEUNE ASIE (meaning Young Asia).

The Congress was addressed by uncle His address was published prominently in the press all over Italy, side by side with glowing accounts of his career with special emphasis on his courage, sacrifice, and political ideas and activities His fame spread to other cities in Italy even amongst the common people and he was often besieged by large groups of admirers not only in Rome but in Milan and other cities. One such admirer was Signor Carbonari, an operator of diesel electric locomotives in Milan who would take leave from his work to be near uncle for any personal service he may be able to render. Signor Carbonari's home in Milan was a refuge for all Indians and he would not knowingly allow any Indian to pass through Milan without availing of his hospitality or at least having a meal with him and his family.

A conference of Indian students in Europe was held in Rome at the same time and a federation of Indian students abroad was formed. Uncle addressed the opening session of the conference and thereafter according to the unanimous desire of the Indian students assembled there, he presided over their conference and guided their deliberations The success of the Indian students's conference was largely due to the untiring efforts of Mr Amiya Nath Sarkar. Mr. Sarkar's thorough knowledge of the Italian language and of the manners and customs of the country and the trust he was able to inspire by his conduct and bearing were subsequently responsible for his choice by uncle as one of his few confidants in Europe. He was later given many confidential assignments in Italy and also elsewhere.

Uncle stayed on in Rome for another two weeks

after we had left. He was anxious to have meetings and discussions with Signor Mussolini who was popularly known as 'Il Duce', and to establish effective contacts with statesmen, adminstrators, and political leaders as well as intellectuals. Besides Mussolini, he met Professor Gentile and Count Ciano who were high up in the hierarchy of the Government The ruling class in Italy were already well-informed about uncle from earlier reports sent by Dr. Gino Scarpa of the Foreign Office, who had previously worked as Consul-General of Italy in Calcutta and other cities in India and was known to have been sympathetic to the Indian cause. Dr. Scarpa had during his tenure in India come in contact with most of the prominent Indian political leaders of the 'thirties. Further, he knew the leading intellectuals in India of the time. We saw Dr. Scarpa several times with uncle in Rome in December Among other intellectuals, he met Professor Tucci, Orientalist and Indologist of international fame, who had been a visiting Professor in Santiniketan and known the Poet well. Professor Tucci had by his writings and lectures interpreted to the intellectual world of Italy the greatness of Indian culture and thus been an ardent friend of India.

At the Congress of Oriental Students, the Arab students in particular were greatly impressed by uncle's address and later by his talks with them. Their leader, Mr. El Jabri, used to call on him at the *Excelsior* for long discussions. Mr El Jabri who hailed from Syria and lived in Switzerland later put uncle in touch with Arab political leaders who were then living in Italy or Switzerland in exile, specially those from Syria which was still under French mandate.

He wrote to me on the 15th January, 1934[1] from Milan as follows.

> "I left Rome on the 15th and shall be here till the 17th or 18th. Thereafter I shall go to Geneva...
> "While in Rome, I had two meetings with the big boss.[2] Please keep this secret, but you may tell Dr. Thierfelder.[3] Moreover, I met the Governor of Rome and was able through his courtesy to look round the works of the Municipality Further, I saw Professor Tucci who had just returned from India and talked things over with him. I hope a good centre will gradually grow up in Rome."

Uncle's visit to Rome, the addresses he delivered at the Oriental Students' Congress and Indian Students' Conference, his meetings with the highest echelons of Italian statesmen and political leaders, intellectuals and others did not go unnoticed by the British Government and their agents in Italy. The correspondents in Rome of the British Press followed his activities closely and were all eager to meet and interview him as often as possible. Though he tried to avoid interviews with those correspondents as much as possible, they could not be excluded from open conferences. The intelligence agencies of the British Government naturally redoubled their activities in keeping track of uncle's movements in Europe

Uncle wrote to me from Geneva on the 13th February. The letter contained two items of interest which in uncle's own words were the following:

> "The India Office (in London), I am told, are very much worried about me They are eager to find

1) The letter was written in Bengali

2) Benito Mussolini

3) Then Secretary, Deutsche Akademie, (Academy of German Intellectuals), Munich

out my motives and intentions Their anxiety has increased after the Rome Conference

"I went for skiing again the other day On the first day, I toppled over each time but on the second day, I was able to pick it up fairly well. I think it is a wonderful sport. Skis can be had for hire at one Franc (one Swiss Franc is almost equal to a German Mark) for half a day If it be convenient, please try to go in for skiing over the week-ends From here it is possible in a couple of hours' journey to reach the mountains which offer facilities for skiing"

On the 20th March, uncle left Geneva and arrived in Munich on the day following after making a brief halt at Zurich. The Indian students there met uncle at a reception on the 21st and sought his guidance as to what should be done to lodge an effective protest with the Governmental authorities against the mounting campaign of slander and hate that had been let loose on non-white races The campaign took the form of publication of slanderous and derogatory articles in the newspapers and periodicals, polite refusal of entry to a number of restaurants and cafes, propaganda with a view to make it difficult for Indians and non-whites to obtain lodgings, jeering at Indian students and calling them "niggers", etc, etc. Fortunately, the propaganda campaign had not till then affected the Universities and educational institutions, but there was every apprehension that discrimination would soon spread to those institutions unless the campaign was checked without delay

As advised by uncle, we addressed a lengthy and strongly-worded memorandum to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Germany detailing our complaints which were substantiated by facts in print. We in Munich were the first among the Indian students'

associations in Germany to send the memorandum to the Foreign Office and this was followed by those in Berlin, Dresden, and other places. In fact the memorandum was drafted by uncle himself in English, and we had it rendered into German by Dr. Ludwig Frank of Munich, who was a retired headmaster and a friend of India. The memorandum was signed on behalf of the Hindusthan Club (Indian Association) by Mr. M. S. Khanna as its Chairman and the writer, as its Secretary. A very important role in collecting relevant facts for the memorandum was played by Mr. Ajit Sen who was then a student of photography and cinematography in Munich.

In Munich during his short stay, uncle met Dr. Karl Haushofer, then Professor of World Politics at the University of Munich. Professor Haushofer had formerly been Colonel-General in the Imperial German Army and had had a most interesting career. After the first World War, he had been a tutor to the Emperor of Japan on military strategy, politics, etc. He knew Japan and China intimately and had also been to India and cherished profound regard for the Indian culture. He was also a prominent member of *Deutsche Akademie.* But what was most important was that he was a prominent member of the National Socialist Party and was regarded as one of the "elder statesmen."

From Munich, uncle went to Prague where he had been invited on the occasion of the inauguration, on the 23rd March, of the Indian Society under the auspices of the Oriental Society The moving spirit behind this was Professor Lesny, the eminent Indologist of Czechoslovakia, who had been to India including Santiniketan. The annual conference of the Federation of Indian Students Abroad was held in

Prague in the year 1936 on the invitation of the Indian Society and it was inaugurated by Professor Lesny. From Prague, uncle proceeded to Berlin.

He wrote to me from there on the 28th March, "I had been to the Foreign Office to discuss the questions relating to India and Germany". He returned to Vienna on the 17th April.

From Vienna, uncle went to Rome on a flying visit on a very important mission. From Rome, he wrote to me at length on the 26th April The text of the letter is reproduced below.

"Excelsior
Rome 26 4 34

My dear Asoke,

I am here on a flying visit. I shall be in Vienna back again on the 30th inst.

In Berlin I made personal representations to the Foreign Office, and to important personages. I submitted a written memorandum to Ministerialrat Dykhoff (Foreign Office) embodying the grievances of Indians and stating facts I did not however meet any of the big guns, except Reichsminister Dr. Schmidt (Minister of Economics). I told him everything and he promised to take the matter up with Herr Hitler. He was surprised to hear of our grievances and he promised to do his best to satisfy us after speaking to Herr Hitler

The Berlin students have by now sent in their memorandum to Government I saw their draft the day I left Berlin The Dresden students have also sent in a memorandum.

If and when you get a reply, please let me know I think you should cultivate Prof. Haushofer. He is a very nice man and friendly. Please give him a copy of your memorandum and ask him to use his influence with the party officials at

Munich. He can easily speak to Herr Hess[1] and Capt Roehm.[2] You may also give a copy of the memo to Dr. Thierfelder, without relying too much on him For this purpose, you must have other friends to support you. That is why I suggest you should cultivate Prof Haushofer. Your weak point in Munich is that you have no friends outside the Deutsche Academy This weakness must be removed

I spoke to I. G. Farben[3] people in Berlin about training They were not unfriendly About this, more in my next

Yours v. affly,
Subhas"

The flying visit to Rome as I understood subsequently from uncle was for the object of meeting Signor Mussolini for important discussions and the interview had been fixed up on the express wish of the latter, by the Secretary of the Party, Signor Starace. The discussions continued for three consecutive days, which was something that rarely happened with Il Duce, who was sparing of interviews with non-European statesmen and leaders.

After returning to Vienna, uncle left again on a tour of the Balkan countries and visited Budapest (capital of Hungary), Bucharest (capital of Roumania), Sofia (capital of Bulgaria) and Belgrade (capital of Yugoslavia) and Zagreb (in Yugoslavia). He returned to Vienna about the middle of June

1) Then Deputy Leader of the National Socialist Party He used to be a pupil of Professor Haushofer in the University of Munich.
2) Commander of the Storm Troopers of the above party, who was executed in 1934 for alleged treason
3) The German Dye Trust—the giant cartel comprising of Bayer, Hoechst, BASF, Agfa and other big concerns, which existed before the second world war

Uncle experienced no difficulty or trouble during his tours in Hungary, Roumania, and Bulgaria. But in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, the British Ambassador there took the extraordinary step of requesting intervention of the Foreign Office of the Yugoslav Government to stop the local papers from publishing interviews with him. It transpired that the leading newspaper of Belgrade, *Politika*, had sent its representative to interview uncle to have the Indian nationalist view of British rule, but subsequently the Editor informed him of his inability to publish the interview Yugoslovia at the time was one of the members of the so-called 'Little Entente' allied to the Anglo-French group (as opposed to the German camp) and the then King of Yugoslavia, Alexander, was a rabid 'anglophile' as well as 'francophile'. The British agents were, of course, on uncle's trail all the time and tried their best to prevent him from making contacts with different governments, statesmen, and other important persons in different countries. Those agents tried to paint him as a Fascist or a Communist as it suited their purpose and resorted to other subtle means to slander him.

It had been settled that I would spend the long University vacation starting from the middle of July at home in India I had provisionally booked my passage for July, but the actual date of sailing still remained to be confirmed. Uncle wrote to me from Vienna on the 11th June, "Please remember that you must meet me before sailing. When do you embark from Genoa?" His next letter dated the 26th June contained very important news and the relevant extracts therefrom are reproduced below.

> "I shall stay in Vienna till the end of August. I have to take a course of 'short-wave diathermy' at

> the Cottage Sanatorium here and also write a book on my political experiences for a London publisher I have taken a flat at the above address where I shall be staying till the end of August next It is a well-furnished flat in a quiet locality in Vienna.
>
> "When do you propose to come here? You can come any time you like and stay as long as you like There will be no difficulty and hardly any extra expenditure for me—because I now have a flat and maidservant Please let me know what you decide If there is nothing special that you are doing in the Laboratory there—you may think of coming over to Vienna".

The flat was situated in Peter Jordan Strasse in the 19th Postal District of Vienna

Uncle had recently entered into a contract with the London publisher, Wishart (later amalgamated with Lawrence and converted into the firm of Lawrence & Wishart), to write a book on his experiences during the last twelve or thirteen years. He had already started preparing the manuscript of his book "*Indian Struggle, 1920-1934*". When I arrived in Vienna on the 12th July to spend a week with uncle, Miss Emilie Schenkl, whom I met for the first time then, used to come every day for 3 to 4 hours to take the dictation and do the typing. Her selection as uncle's Secretary followed after long and careful scrutiny, as apart from proficiency in the English language and skill in typing, what was required was a person of integrity and fully worthy of confidence.

There was another gentleman living then in uncle's flat as his guest—Mr. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. Mr. Sinha then a young man, had contracted during his incarceration in 1931-32 in India, a serious disease of the throat, which threatened to deprive him of the power of speech.

Babu Rajendra Prasad sent Mr. Sinha to Vienna with a letter of introduction to uncle who invited Mr. Sinha to be his guest and made necessary arrangements for his treatment. Mr. Sinha recovered fully after a few months and returned to India shortly thereafter. He became Chief Minister of Bihar for a few months in the year 1968. Indian and Austrian friends were often invited to uncle's flat and treated to sumptuous Indian food cooked by uncle himself. It is not generally known that uncle happened to be a very good cook and particularly excelled in preparing chicken dishes and of course *"luchis"*[1] Dr. B. B. Ray, Professor of Physics at the University of Calcutta (since deceased), who had been a contemporary of uncle in the College and who was then on a visit to Europe used to come to uncle's flat almost every other day.

I returned to Munich on the 19th July and sailed for India on the 26th July from Genoa, arriving at Bombay on the 6th August, 1934.

At the Bombay Port, I was greatly harassed by the Customs people who searched not only every item of my baggage, but every article contained therein, including shoes and slippers. They suspected that I might be carrying some message from uncle to people at home. Having found nothing incriminating, and after having damaged my personal effects in the course of their examination, they took away my diary for 1933 and some letters addressed to me by Mr. George Lansbury[2], then Leader of the Labour Party in British Parliament, Mr. Ernest Thurtle, Member of British

1) Thin bread of flour fried in butter

2) He as well as Mr. Thurtle were vociferous in their demand in the British Parliament for release of father and other State Prisoners from illegal detention by the then Conservative Government

Parliament, and a few others It took me about three hours to pass through the Customs.

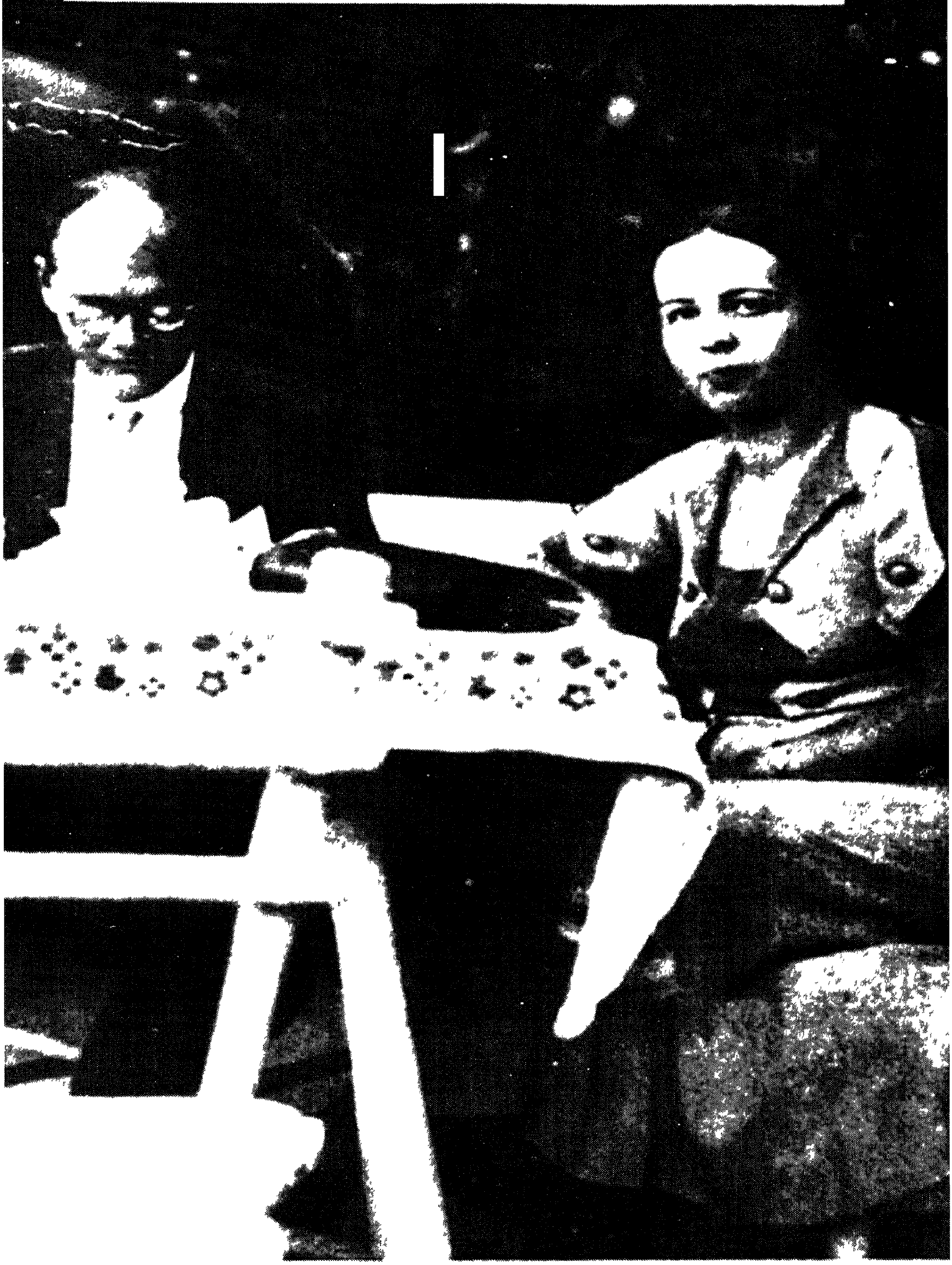
Uncle had given me an assignment in Bombay. The late V J. Patel had bequeathed a sum of Rupees One Lakh towards foreign propaganda and stipulated in his will that the money should be spent as directed by uncle The late Mr. Patel had no issue and named two of his relations—Mr Gordhanbhai Patel and Dr. Purushottam Patel—as the executors of his will. I was to call on both the gentlemen in turn and make discreet enquiries as to when they proposed to apply for probate of the will. Although I was received by both of them with due courtesy, they were absolutely non-committal Subsequently, the will itself was challenged in the Bombay High Court by the relations of late V. J Patel headed by the late Mr. Patel's own brother, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The late Mr. Bhulabhai Desai appeared for Sardar Vallabhbhai and succeeded in obtaining the decision of the Court in favour of his clients and against uncle. The same Mr. Bhulabhai Desai played a different role as a Counsel in the I N A trial at the Red Fort in Delhi in the year 1946-47 He had in the year 1945-46 incurred the displeasure of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and lost his confidence and was obliged to make his exit from the political field at the end of the I N A trial.

Politically, India was rather quiet in the year 1934. The Civil Disobedience movement had been withdrawn by the Congress about a year before and a feeling of depression had already set in all over the country The Congress leaders were then talking in terms of contesting the elections and entering the legislatures. In Bengal, absence of a real leader was being particularly and keenly felt; with Mr. Sengupta dead, uncle in exile, and father in internment, there

was nobody else who could provide dynamic leadership Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy had not till then emerged as a front-rank leader Indeed, though he had ever been a loyal supporter of the official congress he had hardly ever entered the political fray He had undergone imprisonment for a very short term in the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930-31, but did not join the same movement in 1932-33 Nor did he come forward to lead popular movements or appear on public platforms He, therefore, failed to rouse any emotional appeal All over the country and specially in Bengal, there was at the time terrible bitterness over the so-called 'Communal Award' of the British Prime Minister, and the decision or rather the indecision of the Congress that it "could neither accept nor reject" the Award made the Congress extremely unpopular in the province Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya took up the leadership of the movement for unequivocal rejection of the Communal Award and was then touring the whole country He arrived in Calcutta shortly after I reached home

Father was at the time still interned at our house in Giddapahar near Kurseong and I was planning to go up to Kurseong to meet him Just a couple of days before I was due to leave Calcutta, an urgent message was received by me to call at the Birla Park to meet Pandit Malaviya I had before then seen Pandit Malaviya several times for whenever he came to Calcutta, he would invariably call on father and uncle, for both of whom he had great affection, but had not had the good fortune of being spoken to by him The elections to the Indian Legislative Assembly were due to be held in a few weeks and nominations of candidates were about to be finalized Father had decided to stand as a candidate from Calcutta, but refused to

1. Netaji with Miss Emilie Schenkl in Karlsbad in 1935 (Ref. P. 121)



2. At the Indian Students' Conference in Rome, 1933 (Ref. P. 89)





3. With Vithalbhai J.Patel in Franzensbad in 1933. (Ref. Page 84)



4. With Arab Leaders in Rome in 1934 (Ref. Page 90)



5. Haripura Congress Session—Flag-hoisting ceremony in 1938 (Ref. P. 156)

accept the nomination of the Congress because of its equivocal attitude towards the Communal Award. He wanted complete freedom to vote against the Award, which the Congress was not willing to let him have. Pandit Malaviya had already formed the Congress Nationalist Party within the Congress to contest the elections on the issue of rejection of the Communal Award and came to Calcutta in connection with the selection of candidates of the party in Bengal. I called at the Birla Park where Pandit Malaviya had been staying and was immediately ushered into his presence He wanted me to convey to father his kind regards and best wishes and his cordial invitation to him to stand in the election on behalf of the Congress Nationalist Party At the same time he made very detailed enquiries of me about uncle's health and asked me to convey to him on my return to Europe his affectionate remembrance Father stood in the election on the ticket of the Congress Nationalist Party and was elected unopposed All the other seats were also won by candidates of the Congress Nationalist Party, those who stood on the ticket of the orthodox Congress having all been defeated

Uncle had asked me when I parted from him in Vienna to tell father that he had recently met Madame Gonne McBride, the fiery revolutionary of Ireland Madame Gonne was a French lady married to the late Mr McBride one of the leading members of the Sinn Finn movement in Ireland, Owing to persecution by the British, she was forced to flee Ireland and live in exile in France, her native land, with her son, Sean McBride, but continued to work for the independence of Ireland. Father had met Madame Gonne in Paris during his student days in England during 1912-14 When uncle subsequently visited Ireland early in 1936

Madame Gonne had been there. Mr. Sean McBride later attained prominence in the political life of Ireland and became one of the Ministers in the late Eamon De Valera's cabinet.

A couple of days before I reached Kurseong, father had sent a lengthy representation to the Home Member, Government of India, at Simla refuting the allegation of his complicity in the terrorist movement made by the latter in the Indian Legislative Assembly on the 2nd August, 1934. The representation was dated the 11th August and contained some startling disclosures about the circumstances leading to his arrest under Regulation III of 1818 and his detention. Father had asked the Government of India's permission to issue a public statement dealing with the allegations and also send a copy of his representation to the Legislative Assembly, but as the Government refused to oblige him, he thought the full text of the representation should be brought to light and exposed to the public gaze

The Government had permitted father's next of kin, that is, wife and children, to visit him at Kurseong and live with him from time to time, but before we were permitted to enter his bungalow, we were submitted to interrogation and in case of suspicion also to search generally at Siliguri (the starting point of the hill road leading to Kurseong and Darjeeling) and the same procedure was repeated during our return from Kurseong. In spite of this, it was decided that we should take the risk of smuggling out a copy of father's representation on our return from Kurseong to Calcutta. Accordingly, this was done, without any untoward incident. Once we had brought it over to Calcutta, it was possible to prepare a large number of typed copies of the representation To

allay any suspicion that the representation had been smuggled out by us, the typed copies were made over to a relative of ours with instructions to proceed to Delhi and Simla and post them under closed cover to the Editors of the leading newspapers throughout the country. Some of the covers were posted even from such places as Benaras, Lucknow, etc. The representation thus found its way to the columns of the leading newspapers. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta published it on the 12th September, 1934 or thereabout As expected, publication of the representation created a big sensation in the country. Among other startling disclosures, the representation contained the following passage "At the interview in October, 1933, my friend was asked, "But why did he keep his brother Subhas in his house and maintain him? Do you know what Subhas is?" and further on 'when he has maintained Subhas and kept him in his house he must be prepared to suffer'. The above words were spoken by the then Governor of Bengal, the notorious Sir John Anderson, to the late Mr Narendra Kumar Basu, Advocate, who at the time was the Leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Legislative Council, in the course of an interview the latter had with the Governor.

In the third week of August, I received uncle's letter of the 15th from Vienna asking me to collect some photographs for his book the manuscript of which was nearing completion. The letter was written in Bengali the relevant extracts from which are as follows ·

> "I do not know how much time you will be able to spare If you can spare time, I shall be particularly happy if you please attend to the following :—
>
> "I want some photographs for my book It would

be very nice if you could collect and send them over. Of course you will not be able to procure them yourself—but may be able to do so with the help of Akshoy[1], Gopal[2] and others. I am giving below a list —

1) Mahatma Gandhi (urgent)
2) Deshabandhu (")
3) Lala Lajpat Rai
4) Lokmanya Tilak
5) Pandit Motilal Nehru
6) View of Congress Session
7) Any other photo which may be appropriate

Regarding (6) & (7) I am not able to say anything definite. You may think over the matter yourself or you may consult Gopal The subject of my book is political history of India from 1920 to 1934 Hence, you may think over which other photographs will be appropriate".

Some of the photographs, but not all, were sent to uncle, but they were not published in his book, "*Indian Struggle, 1920-1934*". Presumably, they could not be fitted into scheme of the book

I sailed for Europe again on the 22nd October, 1934, and reached Munich on the 2nd November. A few weeks before I left, my grandfather had had a serious heart attack coupled with kidney troubles, and was completely bedridden

Shortly after my return to Munich, uncle who was then in Vienna wrote to me that as medicines had failed to give him permanent relief, he had decided to go in for surgical treatment and would shortly consult the surgeon and fix the date of operation However, on receipt of the very disturbing news about

1) The late Akshoy Kumar Sarkar who formerly belonged to the editorial staff of "Liberty" and was then Editor of the weekly, "Kheyali", now defunct
2) Mr Gopal Lal Sanyal, formerly Editor of "Nabashakti" the well-known weekly journal, also now defunct.

my grandfather's condition, he postponed the surgical operation pending receipt of further news from home. On the 26th November, he received a cable from my grandmother informing him that grandfather's condition was grave and asking him to come home by air immediately He telegraphed me in Munich at once and I reached Vienna on the 28th November early in the morning Uncle had then given up the flat he had taken in Peter Jordan Strasse and moved into the *Hotel de France* in the expectation that he would shortly go in for surgical operation and after a period of convalescence would return home.

The manuscript of his book had then been completed already and the publishers in London, Messrs. Wishart & Co, were seeing it through the press. In fact, at that moment he was looking over the final proofs of the book which had been sent to him by the publishers in London His plane was due to leave Vienna early in the morning on the day following, that is, on the 29th November. The time at his disposal was so short that he had to sit up the whole night without a wink of sleep to complete reading the final proofs of the book

In the year 1934, night-flying by planes had not been introduced and it took about four days to reach India from Europe by plane. The planes of all lines—British, French and Dutch—flew only by day stopping over at nights Uncle took the plane for Rome in the morning of the 29th from Vienna. Miss Emilie Schenkl who had been acting as his Secretary took charge of the final proofs of the book to be forwarded to the publishers in London, and I of his correspondence and other papers Uncle reached Rome the same afternoon, stopped over there for the night, and took the Royal Dutch (KLM) plane thence on the

30th. The plane touched down at Karachi on the 3rd December. At Karachi uncle got the news of grandfather's death which had taken place earlier on the same day. The plane landed at the Dum-Dum Airport at about 4 P.M. on the 4th December when an order of home-internment was served on uncle and he was asked to proceed to 38/2, Elgin Road and stay there during the mourning period. Father had also come down to Calcutta on parole and remained there to observe mourning.

Towards the end of December, 1934, I was informed that the Government of India had permitted uncle to proceed to Europe after the mourning period was over.

On the 20th January, 1935, uncle landed at Naples in Italy and wrote to me from there at some length. I give below relevant extracts from his letter :*

> "I received your letter on arrival at Naples today. I leave for Rome day after to-morrow and after staying there for 2/3 days wish to proceed to Vienna I shall stop at Hotel Excelsior in Rome. If there be nothing urgent to communicate, please reply to this to Vienna
>
> "Please let me know if you remember, what news about me (after my return to India) appeared in the London 'Times' Please send the cuttings if you have them.
>
> "My health is on the whole just the same The pain in my abdomen increased during my stay at home. I suffered on board ship as well Most probably I shall go in for surgical operation in Vienna.
>
> "Please send all letters of mine inside a parcel per registered post to Vienna. There is no hurry—you may send them after getting news of my arrival there

*This letter also was written in Bengali

"I had been home-interned. On leaving Bengal I was automatically released, but the police escort was with me till the last and left me only after I had boarded the steamer. This time, however, the police did not misbehave in Bombay. I was, therefore, able to talk to friends in Bombay and to give interview to the Press".

On the 27th January, uncle wrote to me from Rome as follows —

"I am leaving here to morrow (Monday) morning. I shall reach Vienna day after to-morrow Have you seen my book? I saw Signor Mussolini and presented a copy to him".

Uncle's book, *Indian Struggle 1920-1934* was published in London towards the middle of December, 1934, and a small parcel containing a few copies were thereupon sent under instructions from Mr. Pulin Seal,* by the publisher to uncle to Naples where he disembarked

I heard later from Mr. Amiya Nath Sarkar who was then in Rome of an incident that happened to uncle as he was returning from Palazzo Venezia (Prime Minister's palace) after presenting a copy of his book, *Indian Struggle 1920-1934,* to Signor Mussolini. An over-zealous security man ran into him on the street near Mussolini's office and challenged him to produce his identity papers He was no doubt a new man at the post and not familiar with uncle's dress— *Achkan* (long flowing coat), trousers, and cap—which was an unusual sight in Europe in those days. Incidentally, uncle stuck to that dress throughout his stay in

*Mr Pulin B Seal, noted Indian journalist in London He had been a student at Cambridge at the time uncle was there, that is 1919-21 Subsequently, he became the London Correspondent of "Forward" and later of "Liberty".

Europe from 1933 to 1936, except on very informal occasions such as, holidaying. Uncle thereupon told the man that he was returning from a visit to 'Il Duce' and had left his papers in the hotel. The man who did not understand English, however, insisted on accompanying uncle to the hotel and was not satisfied till the passport and other papers had been shown to him. The matter was reported to the authorities next morning despite uncle's reluctance to do so and very severe action was taken against the over-zealous Security Officer.

Monuments of martyrs and edifices specially depicting freedom movements, interested uncle greatly. During his several visits to Rome, he went to see the exhibition on the Fascist movement and was very much impressed by the Hall of Martyrs A replica of such a hall he wanted to have in the Mahajati Sadan which project he had already thought of and was then working out details thereof. This wish of his was conveyed to the Party Headquarters and assurance was promptly given that the architects who had built that hall would be sent with the plans to Calcutta at the cost of the Italian Government as a gesture of sympathy for the cause of Indian independence, whenever uncle would send word to that effect. Viscount Milesi, the Vice-Consul for Italy in Calcutta, who eventually rose to be the Secretary to the Italian Foreign Minister's Cabinet, played a significant role not only in making the arrangement this time but also later at the time of uncle's escape from India in helping him with travel documents issued from Kabul. Unfortunately, uncle's plans could not be realised owing to outbreak of the world war in Europe in 1939, though he had the foundation stone of the building laid in that year by the Poet.

One other thing deserves mention here. While in Rome or Milan, uncle did not confine his meetings to Italian statesmen, intellectuals and industrialists only, but availed himself of the opportunity of meeting statesmen and leaders of other countries who happened to be in the city During one of his visits to Rome, he called on Mr Litvinoff, then Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union at the Russian Embassy and had a long talk with him. Further, he met ex-King Amanullah of Afganistan and his erstwhile Foreign Minister, both of whom were living in exile in Rome In fact, uncle was invited to have tea with the ex-King and at the end of the meeting was sent back to his hotel in the ex-King's own private luxurious 'Isotta Fraschini' car

During his visit to Rome towards the end of January, uncle was informed that Mr (later Dr.) Moni Moulik* who had come to Rome to work for his doctorate in Economics at the University, was lying critically ill at the State Polyclinic and that his condition was causing great anxiety In spite of pressing engagements, uncle went over to the clinic to see Mr. Moulik. Winter in Rome can be very severe and depressing and the weather on the day of his visit was one of the most wretched that could be imagined The condition of Mr Moulik was so grave as to cast a gloom over his Indian friends who had come to see him at the clinic Uncle spent a long time there and talked things over with the attend-

*Dr Monindra Mohan Moulik, well-known journalist and writer who held important diplomatic assignments in Indian Embassies in Washington, Tokyo, New York and other places Subsequently, he joined the Food & Agricultural Organization of the U N O and retired as Director He is at present in Rome as Consultant to F.A O

ing physicians. Finally, he told everybody present not to lose heart as all that was possible was being done for the patient. Uncle's visit seemed to have dispelled the gloom and the patient and his friends felt reassured. Fortunately, the condition of Mr. Moulik improved appreciably on the day following and he eventually recovered and could resume his research and qualify for the doctorate after a year or so. Uncle's fellow-feeling and affection were so genuine and deep that nobody who ever came into contact with him, whether young students or members of the Indian legion or soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj, could fail to be touched by them. This was the secret of his magnetic influence over his followers which would make them face any danger and even death smilingly at his behest.

After reaching Vienna, uncle wrote to me on the 30th January. The English translation of the relevant extracts of the letter is given below:

> "I have seen my book. The printing is good Will Pulin send it to you? Do you have any contacts with the help of which the book can be got reviewed by *Voelkischer Beobachter*[1] or *Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten*[2]. *Manchester Guardian* (of England) has published a good review. Pulin has written to say that the sale will not be bad It is, of course, not known what will happen at home It cannot be said there is no possibility of its entry being banned"
>
> "Kumar Debendralal[3] has withdrawn Had he stood on the ticket of the Nationalist Party he would have been elected uncontested He had

1) The official organ of the National Socialist Party, published from Munich.

2) The leading daily of Munich

3) Kumar Debendralal Khan, the noted Congress leader of Midnapore District, West Bengal.

> even agreed to do so. Subsequently, in view of Bidhan Babu's[1] objection, he backed out and stood as a candidate on behalf of the Parliamentary Board. As a consequence of his withdrawal, Amar Chatterjee[2] has been elected uncontested."

Actually, the entry of the book into India was banned by the Government of India as soon as it was published, in spite of its favourable review by all the leading newspapers and periodicals in England.

True to his nature, uncle took up the thread of his work as soon as he reached Vienna, despite ill-health. He wrote to me thus on the 9th February: *

> "I am going to deliver a lecture on the 26th instant before the Women's Club here on 'The place of Indian women in the Indian freedom movement'
>
> "On the 23rd February, Vienna Radio will broadcast a programme of Indian music from 10 to 10-45 P M If this is liked by the public, the local 'Radio' may broadcast such a programme of Indian music once every month. Wherever you may be, try to listen in to Vienna Radio on the 23rd evening, and on the day following write to the Vienna Radio in German to say that you liked the programme
>
> "I shall have to undergo treatment for at least a month now for bowel infection and then surgical operation"

Uncle did not confine himself to publicity and propaganda on the political plane only, but concerned himself simultaneously with activities in the cultural field calculated to project a favourable image of India before countries in Europe.

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1) Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy.

2) Mr. Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, well-known revolutionary leader who was formerly a co-worker of Rashbehary Bose and M N. Roy and who subsequently joined Congress.

*The letter was written in Bengali.

In the meantime, I arranged to get a number of copies of *Indian Struggle 1920-1934* from London through one of the leading and enterprising booksellers in Munich and persuade them to maintain with them a stock thereof. I asked the bookseller concerned to send a copy of the book with my compliments to Professor Dr Karl Haushofer (retired Colonel-General of the German Army) who was then holding the chair of World Politics at the University of Munich. On receipt of the book, Professor Dr. Haushofer wrote to me as folows:

Munich
12th February, 1935

"Esteemed Mr Bose,

"I received with great pleasure a few minutes before I got your letter the most highly interesting book by your uncle and I have been racking my brains to find out by what magic the book juggled its way to the worthy bookseller Joh. Nik Frank of Amalienstrasse and from him to me

"Although I have just recovered from an attack of influenza lasting for ten days and am overburdened with work so much so that I do not know where to begin or where to end, I shall read this book as the first one and discuss it simultaneously in my third series of lectures on 'World Politics' as a first-hand account of India and her freedom movement. Please tell your uncle that I still remember vividly the inspiring conversation I had had with him and how it has pleased me to receive his present and also that this has come to the proper hands

"I earnestly hope that your uncle will surmount victoriously the various obstacles that beset his path not only in his own interest but in that of his great Indian fatherland and please assure him that I think of him with the deepest regards.

"While conveying to you my kind regards I express the hope of seeing you soon once more at my place *

Yours sincerely,
K. Haushofer"

The premier and most respectable daily newspaper of Berlin, *Berliner Tageblatt*, which occupied a position similar to *Times* of London in those days published a very favourable review of *Indian Struggle 1920-1934* in its issue of the 31st March, 1935. The reviewer observed that "The book differs entirely in a welcome manner from the usual polemical literature on the Indian question. The author is above all a very talented writer. He knows how to treat fundamental issues in precise terms and concise manner and make the book intensely interesting reading."

Friends in Germany and Austria were extremely eager to get uncle's book translated into the German language and published It was quite an easy thing to find translators, but the real difficulty was about finding a suitable publisher. Mr. & Mrs. Fueloep-Miller tried their utmost to find one and during my visit to Berlin in the third week of March, 1935, I sounded several parties, but these efforts did not at the time meet with success. I called on Dr. Lothar Frank and had very interesting talks with him Uncle had written to me before I went to Berlin asking me to see Dr. Frank Also, he wrote to Dr. Frank about me Dr. Frank promised to try to find a publisher. In spite of best efforts on his part and on that of others, both in Germany and Austria, it was not possible to get a publisher for the German translation of uncle's book at that time

*The letter in original was in the German language.

During my visit to Berlin, I met and got well acquainted with Mr. Abid Hassan and Mr. N. G. Swamy. Both Messrs Hassan and Swamy, who were then studying in Berlin later played notable parts in the Azad Hind movement in Germany during the Second World War and later on in the Indian National Army in the Far East. Mr. Abid Hassan accompanied uncle as his adjutant on his historic submarine trip from Germany to the Far East and Mr. Swamy followed them subsequently in another submarine

It may not be out of place to mention here that Dr. Subodh Kumar Majumder who after independence became the Educational Adviser to the Indian Ambassador in West Germany and who was also a student in Munich in the 'thirties, presented to the Indian public for the first time through the writer the photograph showing uncle on the submarine with Mr Abid Hassan. The photograph in question was in fact collected by Mrs Majumder (a German lady) from the mother of one of the officers of that submarine

Another student in Berlin whom I had met previously in Munich and who was then one of the leaders of the Indian community and used to render valuable services to uncle was Mr. M. L Gauba, son of Lala Harakishenlal, famous revolutionary of the Punjab in the early years of this century, and brother of the well-known lawyer and author, Mr K L Gauba, who was uncle's contemporary in Cambridge in the 'twenties

In the third week of March, uncle had to pay a flying visit to Geneva to unveil a memorial tablet for the late V. J Patel at the clinic in Gland where the latter had died Uncle desired that Indian students' organizations in Europe should send wreaths on the occasion. We learned from uncle subsequently that

the wreaths sent by Vienna and Munich were the best among those received.

On the 24th April, uncle wrote to me from a new address—Rudolfiner Haus, Billrothstrasse—as follows:

> "I came here yesterday—for surgical operation Professor Demel will operate on me this afternoon at 4 P.M. for removal of the gall-bladder. I did not inform you earlier as I do not think it is necessary for yon to come here. Friends here have been and are helping in every way. You should not worry at all I have asked Dr Katyar* and my Secretary. Fraeulein Schenkl, to send you a letter every day Above all please remember—no news is good news Do not waste money unnecessarily by sending telegrams If necessary, I shall telegraph myself."

I would have certainly gone over to Vienna at the time of uncle's operation, had I received intimation of the date beforehand, though at the time I was deeply engrossed in the final stages of work on my thesis for the doctorate degree. Uncle knew about this and therefore decided that unless it was absolutely necessary I should not be distracted, but be allowed to devote undivided attention to my studies.

On the 28th April, uncle wrote to me in his own hand as follows:

> "I had the operation on Wednesday (24th April) Gall-bladder with a big stone inside was removed. Operation performed successfully Progress steadily maintained If all goes well, the Professor hopes to remove the stitches on Tuesday, the 30th Another week in the Sanatorium thereafter and I shall be out then No anxiety Hope you are well and other friends"

*One of the seniormost postgraduate medical students in Vienna hailing from Northern India

Uncle stayed for about three weeks at the sanatorium after the operation and then moved to another sanatorium at Purkersdorf, a suburb of Vienna. From there he wrote to me on the 20th May as follows

> "Have you seen in the Indian papers that the Motion Pictures Society of India has sent a message to the International Film Congress protesting against the exhibition of the films 'India speaks' and 'Bengali'. I understand that the Congress is going to be held in Berlin. If it has not been held already, it would be advisable to forward a cutting to the Secretary of the Congress in case the original letter has not reached him"

The above will show that nothing that was likely to disparage India or Indian culture escaped uncle's attention, whether he was ill or well. The films were subsequently withdrawn from public exhibition owing mainly to uncle's vehement protests In the same letter, uncle wrote further · "In case I stay long, I shall begin writing another book and shall choose a place suitable for the purpose"

In the postscript of the letter he continued,

> "I think Bruckmanns have returned the book. If so, please send to the Piper Verlag along with copies of the English reviews It has to be sent to Mr Piper himself saying that you are doing so under instructions from me. Please let me know what reviews you send him. Mrs Fueloep-Miller has talked the matter over with Mr. Piper's son who was here the other day and the son has already written to the father about my book"

In spite of earnest efforts, it was not possible to persuade any publisher in Germany to publish the German edition of his book before the Second World War.

Uncle wrote to me again on the 24th May from Vienna as follows:

"Since coming here a week ago, I have gained somewhat in strength I propose to stay on here for one or two weeks more and then go out for a change. I have not been able to decide where I should go, but in view of my intestinal trouble, I am thinking of Karlsbad. My final decision will depend partly on what my doctor advises me and partly on the financial arrangements they are able to make at home. If I stay in Europe for some months longer and if I can get sufficient money for employing a Secretary for some months, I would like to start writing another book I have at present two ideas in my head—a history of the Indian Nationalist movement and a book dealing with the future course of Indian politics which will embody my ideas as well Which do you think I should take in hand first?"

Uncle's next letter dated the 28th May indicated that he was still considering the financial implications of writing another book as well as of going out for a change Relevant extracts of the English translation thereof which are given below will be read with interest in the light of economic conditions obtaining in Europe at that time and those obtaining currently :

"I have not yet been able to decide whether I should start writing a new book. I may be able to engage a Secretary in Vienna for a salary of 60 Schillings (that is Rs 30/-) per month. Expenses will be much more if I go outside If I engage a new person then the cost will be more—if I have to take anybody from here, the cost will be likewise more as I would have to pay 60 Schillings over and above board and lodging. Last time I got an advance of £ 50 form the publishers and hence was able to make arrangements If I obtain money from some source this time I may start writing the book. It is impossible for me to live in Europe now without work.

"I have not yet heard from friends in India as to

how long they will be able to go on remitting money to me.

"I intend going out about 7th/8th June Most probably I will go to Karlsbad. I will go there only if I am able to make arrangements for board and lodging at reasonable rates—otherwise not."

About the same time information was received by uncle that Mrs. Kamala Nehru was coming to Europe in the first week of June for treatment, accompanied by her physician, Dr. Atal. and that she would be brought to Vienna first for consultation with internationally-known specialists there. Dr. Atal was a member of the Indian Medical Mission deputed to China by the All-India Congress Committee a few years ago and earned considerable reputation there for his commendable work. Uncle made prior arrangements for prompt medical attention for Mrs. Nehru immediately on her arrival He asked some of the Indian students in Vienna including two senior students of medicine as well as Mr Amiya Nath Sarkar who was then on a visit to Vienna to attend the railway station to render Mrs. Nehru and party all necessary assistance Mrs. Nehru was so ill at the time that she had to be brought down from the train on a stretcher. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, the eminent philologist, now National Professor, who was then on a visit to Europe arrived in Vienna a few hours earlier on the same day. Our Prime Minister, who was then Miss Indira Nehru, accompanied her mother on the trip and set an example to all by her devoted nursing Although uncle himself was rather ill at the time having undergone surgical operation recently and was in urgent need of further treatment at Karlsbad, he could not think of going out of Vienna without personally seeing through all necessary arrange-

ments for Mrs. Nehru's treatment in Vienna and thereafter in Berlin As by that time, he was able to make satisfactory arrangements for stay in Europe for 6-8 months more and a change at Karlsbad, he proceeded there on the 15th June.

He wrote to me in the first week of June from *Hotel de France*, Vienna, where he had moved in prior to his departure for Karlsbad, "Have received your letter of the 3rd June. My departure for Karlsbad has been deferred by a few days as Mrs. Kamala Nehru has come here She will probably go to Berlin next week for operation and thereafter go to Switzerland"

On the 17th June, he wrote to me from Karlsbad, "I arrived here last night. I travelled with Shrimati Kamala Nehru on the same train up to Prague. Dr. Katyar accompanied her to Berlin. Dr. Atal (her physician and relation) has already proceeded to Berlin for making necessary arrangements for her operation"

The surgical operation on Mrs. Kamala Nehru was apparently successful and thereafter she was taken to a sanatorium in Badenweiler in the Black Forest region of Germany near the German-Swiss frontier.

I was admitted to the Doctorate degree of the Technical University of Munich on the 25th June, 1935. My plan was then to obtain practical training in the manufacture of Coal Chemicals including dyestuffs in Germany, and, failing that, in other countries in Europe. I had earlier written to uncle asking for his help in the matter. In 1935 and thereafter till the end of the Second World War, it was exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for foreigners to get into a factory for manufacture of chemicals of any kind in Germany, though it was possible to secure admission into

machinery manufacturing works, textile mills, and other concerns. Uncle spared no efforts for securing facilities for practical training for me as well as for others in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, and it was ultimately through his efforts that I was able to obtain admission in 1936 into a Chemical Works in Germany manufacturing primary Coal Chemicals. It was surprising that although the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industries maintained a representative in Germany during the period 1935-38, the latter was not able to exert his influence in securing necessary facilities for Indian students for practical training in Germany.*

I saw myself that in the midst of exacting preoccupations, uncle was ever willing to spare time for Indian students or trainees, to meet them and discuss their problems. If anybody's scholarship was being withheld or if anybody was seeking opportunities for training or if anybody's apprenticeship allowance was being withheld, he would volunteer to write to or, if necessary, see the authorities concerned for help The well-being of the Indian community abroad was something very dear to his heart and wherever he went he would not fail to meet the Indians there and enquire after their welfare.

On the 26th July, 1935, father was released unconditionally from detention under Regulation III of 1818, after nearly three years and a half His release was followed by that of other state prisoners by and by. With father's return to active professional and public life, the political temper in Bengal started rising After the tragic death of Mr J. M. Sengupta, a gradual disintegration had set in amongst his erstwhile camp-followers A process of disintegration had like-

* See his article on the subject in Appendix

wise begun taking place amongst people and groups who had hitherto claimed to owe allegiance to uncle. This led to realignment of groups and parties in the Congress organization in Bengal, which finally crystallized in the year following.

Following completion of my academic studies in Munich, I made a short trip to Berlin early in July on the occasion of the annual session of the Federation of Indian Students Abroad, which was presided over by Mr. (later Dr.) Amiya Chakravarty. A message from uncle who could not come was read out at the very outset of the session wishing success to the deliberations thereof Then after closing down my establishment in Munich, I finally arrived in Karlsbad early in August to spend a fortnight with uncle. I put up at the same place with uncle in Karlsbad viz., at the *Kurhaus Koenigin Alexandra,* which was a sort of rest-cum-boarding house. I found uncle greatly improved in health though he was still not his old self. He followed a tight schedule in his every-day life He started his day with a course of drinking the medicinal water at the famous hot springs of Karlsbad followed by a walk after which he would have his breakfast After breakfast he sat down to writing and attending to his correspondence. Fraeulein Emilie Schenkl, who had acted as his Secretary in the previous year while he wrote *Indian Struggle 1920-34* had been asked to come over to Karlsbad to assist him again and she arrived a few days after uncle had settled down there After lunch and a little rest, uncle resumed his dictation Occasionally, we went out on short excursions to the beautiful countryside around Karlsbad In the afternoon, uncle had to go to the hot springs once again and in the evening before and after dinner, he used to devote himself to studies and preparation of notes for work

for the next day. The recreational facilities offered at Karlsbad were naturally much less than those in cities like Prague and certainly very much less than those in Vienna or Berlin. Lest we should feel life drab and monotonous, uncle asked me to go out and also take Fraeulein Schenkl out occasionally, if she was free, to places of entertainment or for sight-seeing.

Apart from working on his next book, uncle wrote a number of interesting letters to and articles for the Indian papers during his stay in Karlsbad One of the first of these was entitled, "All about Geneva, where nations of the world meet." This was in the form of a letter addressed to the "United Press of India" summing up his impressions of Geneva, and was published among others in the *Forward* of Calcutta on the 24th August, 1935. The second letter, also addressed to the "United Press of India", offered his suggestions on procurement of facilities for practical training for Indian students. After explaining the difficulties experienced by Indian students in securing admission into factories, specially in Germany, he suggested several remedies including one stipulating conditions for training of apprentices in future bilateral trade agreements Uncle wrote further, that "Ever since I realised the coming difficulty in Germany in 1933, I have been trying to develop contacts in other countries, so that if Germany ultimately shuts her doors on Indian apprentices, they may not be stranded altogether. I am glad to say that there are openings for Indians in other countries and these could be developed further, if we work with a definite plan and purpose." This letter was published in *Forward* on the 25th August, 1935 But the most interesting and at the same time fascinating article which uncle wrote in Karlsbad was the account of his interview on the

3rd April, 1935, with the great savant, Mon Romain Rolland. The article was published in the *Modern Review* of September, 1935, and reproduced in other daily newspapers including *Forward* (dated the 6th September, 1935) and subsequently in other periodicals. The above two articles are reproduced in the Appendices I and II respectively

I left Karlsbad towards the middle of August, 1935, and went back to Germany. On the 1st September, uncle wrote to me that he had just received information that there had been a serious relapse of illness of Shrimati Kamala Nehru at Badenweiler where she had been convalescing after her operation and that therefore he would proceed there very soon. He wrote to me again on the 6th September in the following terms*: "I am leaving for Badenweiler on Sunday, the 8th instant I shall stay there for about a week. Got news yesterday that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been released. He is flying to Europe. Mrs. Kamala Nehru's condition is still very grave." Pandit Jawaharlal arrived at Badenweiler on the 8th September in the evening. Uncle drove up to Basel on the border of Germany and Switzerland to meet him. Pandit Nehru put up at the same boarding house at Badenweiler with uncle Mrs Nehru rallied somewhat after Pandit Nehru's arrival, and as there was no immediate danger to her life, uncle left Badenweiler on the 18th September and proceeded to Badgastein, the famous spa (in Austria), the medicinal waters of which were recommended to uncle for cure of his intestinal complaints that were still lingering

About this time, Hitler delivered a speech extolling the virtues of the white races, specially of 'nordic' origin, characterizing them as natural rulers over other

*The letter was written in Bengali.

peoples. This evoked such a storm of protest all the world over, in which uncle and the Japanese Ambassador in Germany took the leading part, that an explanation in reply was subsequently issued by the National Socialist Party that their leader's statement did not apply to India and Japan. In the year 1943, the same Hitler told uncle that he would tear up the Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan, if the Japanese did not extend their wholehearted and active support to the Indian National Army in its fight against the British for independence.

I was not able to fix up my practical training in Germany in the year 1935 though I received some promises. In the meantime, I got an offer for such training in England beginning from January, 1936. As there were still a couple of months left and the marriage of my sister, Mira, had been fixed up in the meantime and scheduled to take place early in December, 1935, I availed myself of the opportunity of getting home and staying there for a few weeks. Accordingly, I sailed from Genoa for India on the 29th October and arrived in Bombay on the 7th November and Calcutta on the 9th November. 1935.

I returned to Europe on the 10th January, 1936, having disembarked at Marseilles. As family affairs delayed my departure from India by a few days and I was in a hurry to reach England in order to commence my practical training, I had no option but to proceed thence straight to London and to drop the idea of making a detour via Vienna where uncle was at the time

On the 3rd February, I got uncle's letter dated the 30th January written from on board *s. s Washington* of the United State Lines bound for Cove in

Ireland (Irish Free State), the English rendering of which is reproduced here:

"I have been on the move since the 12th. I am now on my way to Dublin after visiting Prague, Berlin, Cologne, Brussels, Antwerp and Paris. Tomorrow evening I arrive at Cove port. After disembarking there and spending the night in Cork, I shall proceed to Dublin. My address there will be—Hotel Shelbourne, Dublin.

"I received your letter from Marseilles Thereafter I got your letters of the 25th and 28th. The Congress Session has been deferred and will be held at the beginning of April. I shall leave Europe for home about the 20th March I shall stay in Dublin probably for 10-12 days There-after a week in Paris, 5/7 days in Geneva and about three weeks in Badgastein My health is so so, but am feeling tired owing to travelling and irregularity in the matter of food The condition of my bowels is not yet good—hence I wish to go to Badgastein once more The postponement of the Congress has made things a little easier for me; otherwise I would have to go back much earlier.

"I was glad to learn that you were getting on well with your work.

"Wirtschafts-Kammer[1] or was it Wirtschafts-Ministerium[2] gave an assurance to Dr. Ganguly[3] that they would arrange for practical training for Indians You may write to Dr. Ganguly on the subject. The Deutsch-Orient Verein (The German-Oriental Society) have written to me in similar terms—but I do not know what influence they

1) Chamber of Commerce
2) Ministry of Commerce
3) Dr. K. L. Ganguly, then representative in Germany of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

have If you are thinking of going to Germany again, you may write to Dr. Ganguly. His address is .

Dr. K L Ganguly
Zahringerstrasse 38
Berlin-Wilmersdorf

"I have duly received the magazine sent by you"

I learned subsequently that in Prague, uncle met and had a long discussion with Dr Eduard Benes, then Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia. He was received by him again in January, 1938, in Prague on his way to London. At that time, Dr. Benes had become the President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia In Berlin, he renewed his contacts with the leading members of the Government and the National-Socialist Party, and in Cologne, he met a number of leading industrialists of Germany to discuss possibilities of practical training for Indians Arrangements for his visit to Ireland were finalized through the Embassy of the Irish Republic in Paris.

As uncle did not have a passport for the United Kingdom, he had to go to Ireland via France instead of via England. Although his passport had not been endorsed for Ireland by the Government of India, the Government of Irish Free State headed by President De Valera, as soon as they learned of uncle's intention of visiting their country, extended a most cordial invitation to him to visit Ireland. It goes without saying that uncle was received in Ireland with the greatest honour Uncle wrote to me from Dublin on the 8th February as follows ·

"I got your letter yesterday Also received the press 'cuttings' I have already seen the news about Hitler's speech Pulin[1] has not sent me any press cuttings about myself You may send

1) Mr Pulin B Seal

them on if you get them from him. I leave here on Tuesday (the 11th February) in the afternoon. My address in Paris . *Hotel Ambassador,* Boulevard Hausmann, Paris 9e"

Uncle had been longing to pay a visit to Ireland before leaving Europe and to meet President Eammon de Valera and other leaders Before the Second World War, Britain was still one of the strongest powers in Europe and her long arm reached every corner of that continent. But it was indeed amazing how little Ireland successfully resisted every effort at intimidation resorted to by her powerful neighbour. She had earlier received the late V. J. Patel with the utmost cordiality and extended a most hearty welcome to uncle during his visit. Besides meeting Mr. De Valera, he met other Minsters of his Government as well as the leaders of the republican movement, who had taken a more radical stand on re-unification of Ireland, partitioned into Irish Free State and Ulster. Also, he addressed a huge public meeting in Dublin at which the veteran revolutionary, Madame Gonne McBride, was present and addressed a few words welcoming uncle.

While uncle was visiting Ireland, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was paying a visit to England After Mrs. Kamala Nehru had rallied somewhat, she was removed to a sanatorium in Lausanne in Switzerland. She started picking up after her change and Pandit Jawaharlal availed himself of the opportunity of paying a short visit to England Needless to add that no ban had been placed by the British Government on Pandit Nehru visiting any country in Europe, much less England He had been released unconditionally as soon as news of Mrs Nehru's grave condition was cabled to India and allowed to come over to Europe

to join his wife I called on Pandit Nehru during his visit to London in February, 1936 He was, I found, heavily engaged, as expected, and could spare only a few minutes for a chat.

Towards the end of February, the condition of Mrs. Kamala Nehru suddenly deteriorated and she died in Lausanne on the 28th February, 1936. After a week thereafter, I got uncle's letter of the 5th March, from Badgastein in Austria. He wrote.

> "I got your letter while in Paris, but could not reply in time due to uncertainty about my programme From Paris, I when to Lausanne Mrs. Kamala Nehru breathed her last while I was there and her last rites were performed there I arrived here day before yesterday from Lausanne. Jawaharlal will leave on the 7th by plane I shall start for home after 2/3 weeks' treatment. Most probably I shall sail on the 20th from Marseilles. I have got a little rest and solace after coming here."

On the 17th March, uncle wrote to me again from Badgastein in the following terms:

> "I have recently received from the Consul (British) in Vienna the following communication: 'I have to-day received instructions from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to communicate to you a warning that the Government of India have seen in the press statements that you propose to return to India this month and the Government of India desire to make it clear to you that should you do so, you cannot expect to remain at liberty'.
>
> Sd/- J. W. Taylor
> His Majesty's Consul

Uncle had written on the 13th March* to Pandit

*A Bunch of Old Letters, Jawaharlal Nehru, Asia Publishing House, Page 168-70.

Jawaharlal informing him of the text of the above communication. He wrote further, "I was on the point of fixing up my passage when I got this note. As a matter of fact, I had delayed booking my passage because I was weighing the comparative advantages of a sea voyage and a journey by air—and in the latter case, I could complete the full course of treatment here which takes 25 days in all. . . . My inclination at the moment—as you can very well imagine from your own reactions—is to defy the warning and go home. The only point that one has to consider is which course would be in the public interest. The personal factor does not count at all with me and personally I am prepared for any line which the public interest demands. When I had resolved to go home in time for the Lucknow Congress, there was, of course, the possibility of my being put in prison on my landing there But there was also the possibility of being allowed to remain a free man, for some time at least. The latter possibility is removed altogether and going home now means going to prison. Of course, going to prison also has its public utility and there is much to be said in favour of defying an official order like this and deliberately courting imprisonment."

So knowing full well that he would be clapped in prison on setting foot on Indian soil, uncle nevertheless sailed for home on the 27th March by the Lloyd Triestino boat, *s. s. Cante Verde.* The boat arrived in Bombay on the 8th April, 1936, and uncle was taken into custody as soon as he landed there and removed to Arthur Road Prison. His passport was impounded at the time of his arrest. This passport, which was his second and issued in 1933 described him as a 'Journalist' by profession. His parting message before being taken away to prison was: "Keep the flag of

freedom flying." With uncle's return to India and incarceration immediately thereafter, the close contact I had had with him during the last three years could not necessarily be maintained as before. Apart from the distance separating us, there was severe restriction on correspondence and on top of that was the hated censor.

Thus ended a very important chapter in uncle's life, the significance of which will be appreciated in the context of sensational events that were to follow a few years later Summing up, it may be stated that between 1933 and 1936, he toured practically the whole of Europe outside the Soviet Union and studied at first hand the conditions of that continent as they obtained as a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles. Through travel and study, uncle was able not merely to understand the situation in Europe at the time, but to have a glimpse of coming events. Apart from rousing interest in India in many countries in Europe, he helped in founding organizations for developing cultural and economic contacts with India Above all, he was able to establish direct contact with leading statesmen of countries which were likely to challenge in a few years the might of the British imperialism in spite of frantic attempts of its agents by various means to prevent him from making such contacts The basis of his contacts with the powers that be in Germany and Italy was actually laid during the period, 1933 to 1936.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1936-1937
In Prison Again

Politically, India was very quiet in the year 1936 and had been so even earlier. The civil disobedience movement had been withdrawn almost three years before and by early 1935 all persons imprisoned on account of participation in that movement had been released. The only people who were kept behind prison bars in 1936 were those who had participated in terroristic activities against the alien government and those who had been *suspected* by that government of complicity in such activities

The new constitution for India passed by the British Parliament in the year 1935 gave a certain measure of autonomy to the Provinces and elections to the provincial legislatures under the new constitution were announced to be held during the period between the end of 1936 and beginning of 1937 The Congress, therefore, began to prepare for these elections in right earnest. It was somewhat surprising that the Government should choose to arrest and detain uncle at a time when the political barometer had

reached a low level. Possibly, the Government wanted to keep uncle out of the election campaign Fortunately, father was out of prison in 1936 and after some initial hesitation, the Congress High Command was obliged to give him the sole charge of the election machinery in Bengal in preference to Dr. B. C. Roy, who had kept himself out of active politics since 1932

In spite of the usual restrictions on correspondence, uncle wrote to me occasionally either from prison or detention camp. As his letters were censored, they did not normally contain anything of general interest, but were necessarily confined to personal matters.

After being arrested on the 8th April, 1936, immediately after disembarkation, uncle, as already stated, was taken to the Arthur Road Prison in Bombay and transferred shortly thereafter to Yerveda Prison in Poona where he was kept for about five weeks Loud and indignant protests against uncle's arrest were raised all over the country. Mr Bhulabhai Desai, the Leader of the Opposition in the Indian Lagislative Assembly tabled an adjournment motion which was passed by an overwhelming majority Even in the British Parliament, Mr. James Maxton and Mr. Campbell Stephen, on behalf of the Independent Labour Party waited on deputation on the then Under-Secretary of State for India, Mr. Richard Butler, urging his immediate release. Questions by other members of the Labour Party were also raised, but as expected, the Government took shelter behind the specious plea of uncle's association with the terrorist movement.

By the third week of May, uncle was taken to our bungalow at Giddapahar near Kurseong and interned there. The conditions under which he was interned at Giddapahar were similar to those which were

Roma
26. 4. 34

My dear Asoke,

I am here on a flying visit. shall be in Vienna back again on the 30th inst.

In Berlin I made personal representations to the Foreign Office, Auswärtiges Amt and to important personages. I submitted a written memorandum to Ministerialrat Dieckhoff, (Foreign Office) embodying the grievances of Indians and stating facts. I did not however meet any of the big guns, except Reichsminister Dr. Schmidt (Minister of Economics) I told him everything and he promised to take the matter up with Herr Hitler. He was surprised to learn of our grievances and he promised to do his best to satisfy us after speaking to Herr Hitler

6. Letter dated 26th April 1934
(Ref. Pages 94-95)

[illegible] have by now
[illegible] to your committee,
[illegible] left Berlin
[illegible] sent in
[illegible]

If and when you get a reply, please let me know. I think you should cultivate Prof. Haushofer. He is a very nice man and friendly. Please send him a copy of your memorandum and ask him to use his influence with the party officials [illegible] with. He can [illegible] speak to Hess and other[illegible]

You [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] should be [illegible]
[illegible] Thanksgiving [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible]

They all also [illegible] in [illegible]

for the [illegible] personal

belongings [illegible]

[illegible]

yours very affly

[illegible]

My dear [illegible] [illegible] Lahore & shall reach here [illegible] mark [illegible]

[illegible]

(1) [illegible]

(2) [illegible]

[illegible] separate [illegible]

(3) [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] about [illegible]

I was [illegible] rushed [illegible]

[illegible]

Yours [illegible]

[illegible]

8. Letter dated 30th April 1937
(Ref. P. 137)

imposed on father during his two years' internment at the same place from 1933 to 1935, and he was permitted to take walks within a radius of one mile from the bungalow. Also, some relaxations were allowed in the matter of interview with relatives and of permitting them to stay with uncle. There was a welcome departure in the treatment meted out to uncle by the Government during his internment in 1936-37 from that accorded to him on previous occasions Perhaps the Government were keen on creating a favourable atmosphere in the country prior to ushering in the New Constitution and had rightly sensed that in spite of all the checks and safeguards, the Congress Party was bound to emerge triumphant in the ensuing elections to the Provincial Legislative Assemblies.

Uncle wrote to me from Giddapahar on the 17th November, 1936:

> "I hope yet that you will be able to complete your training in some coal tar works before you leave Germany Before you finally give up the attempt, why not run up to Berlin yourself and interview some of the big Johnnies there? It sometimes happens that a personal interview succeeds, where other attempts fail"

Acting on his advice, I was about to go to Berlin when I got a message from the Deutsch—Orient Verein stating that they had been able to fix up practical training for me at one of the famous Coal Tar and Coal Chemical Works of the Ruhr district of Germany and asking me to proceed there. Practical training for some other Indian students were arranged for by the same organization There was no doubt that under the conditions existing in Germany at that time, this would not have been possible but for uncle's energetic intercession during his stay in Europe from 1933 to 1936

On account of bowel troubles and throat infection which uncle contracted in Poona and which persisted for weeks together at Giddapahar, he was brought down to Calcutta on the 17th December, 1936, for treatment, and interned at the Medical College Hospital in Calcutta. There he was allowed interviews with near relatives every day Subsequently, uncle was permitted to come to our Elgin Road house under police escort every day in the afternoon and spend a couple of hours with my aged grandmother as it was not possible for her to go over daily to the Medical College Hospital. The police escort chose to wait downstairs and did not intrude upon the interview uncle used to have with grandmother and other members of the family upstairs. This was the state of affairs when I returned from Europe about the middle of February, 1937. By that time, the elections to the provincial legislatures had been over and the Congress returned with absolute majority in seven out of the eleven provinces In Bengal, practically all the seats in the so-called 'general' constituencies were captured by the Congress and it was only due to the system of separate electorates, giving overwhelming weightage to the Muslims, that Congress was not able to secure an absolute majority in the legislature The emergence of a powerful opposition under father's leadership was, however, sufficient to produce a depressing and demoralising effect on the Government.

On the 17th March, 1937, shortly after uncle had come to our Elgin Road house for interview with grandmother, one of the Deputy Commissioners of Police walked in with the order for uncle's unconditional release from detention.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1937-1938
President of the Congress

After his release from detention in March, 1937, uncle took up residence in 38/2, Elgin Road (now known as Netaji Bhavan) and stayed there till January, 1941, except for short breaks.

As uncle's health was still below par, it was decided that he should in the first place, go out for a change of climate for several months. The physicians recommended a cool dry place and the choice ultimately fell on Dalhousie in the Punjab Himalayas. In fact, there could be no other choice as Dr N. R. Dharmavir and his charming wife, Mrs. Janaki Dharmavir, insisted on having uncle with them as a guest in their bungalow at Dalhousie. Uncle's friendship with Dr. Dharmavir and his family dated back to his student days in England during 1919-21. After completing his higher education in medicine in England and obtaining his degree, Dr. Dharmavir started practice in that country, married an English lady, and set up his home in a city in northern England Dr.

Dharmavir remained in England for more than ten years and built up a very good practice there before he returned to India in the early 'thirties. Mrs. Dharmavir, whose maiden name was 'Jane', changed hers to 'Janaki' and also gave purely Indian names to both her daughters—Sita and Leela—who were born in Europe. I had previously learnt from uncle that the Dharmavirs' house in England used to be a most warm and hospitable retreat for Indian students there. Uncle had been a most welcome guest in Dharmavirs' home during his student days in England, at least on two occasions, and he gave a delightful account of their hospitality. Among others who enjoyed Dr and Mrs. Dharmavirs' hospitality in those days in England was Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy, the noted musician, who happened to be in England at about the same time I had not, till then, had the honour of Dr. and Mrs. Dharmavirs' valued acquaintance, but met both Sita (recently deceased) and Leela in 1936 in Prague, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Federation of Indian Students Abroad, held there They were at the time in England for higher studies in medicine. Their conduct and bearing were such that it was not possible for anybody to discern the fact of their English descent unless told so. Of the elder sister, Sita, we saw more subsequently when later on she came to Calcutta and lived with us for a few months. Still later, Dr Sita Dharmavir married the famous Surgeon of Delhi, Dr Santosh Sen, and apart from being a leading specialist in womens' diseases, she was one of the active Directors of the well-known *Dr Sen's Nursing Home* in New Delhi.

Having decided to accept Dr. Dharmavir's kind hospitality, uncle left Calcutta on the 25th May, 1937, for Allahabad, en route to Dalhousie. From the train

on his journey to Lahore from Allahabad, he wrote to me as follows:

Train
30 4 37.

"My dear Asoke,

I am on my way to Lahore and shall reach there tomorrow morning. Please ask the following papers to send my complimentary paper to me C/o Dr. Dharmavir, Dalhousie, Punjab :—

(1) Amrita B P. (2) Ananda B. P. (3) Advance (4) Keshari (Bengali daily) (5) Viswamitra (Hindi daily) (6) Lokmanya (Hindi daily) (7) Azad (Bengali daily)

Telephone to Mohammadi Office, Upper Circular Rd.
(8) Basumati

(2) I am writing to Mejdada under separate cover. Please forward the letter to him if he is not in Calcutta

(3) Please look after Panditji[1] and party when he goes to Burma and when he returns

(4) If Panditji agrees to see Dr Aponte,[2] please telephone to the latter and arrange it

How is Mejobowdidi[3] ? Please let me know. And What about yourself ?

I was terribly rushed when I was in Allahabad.

Yours v. affly,
Subhas"

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived in Calcutta on the 23rd May, 1937, with his daughter, Indira, and his Secretary, Mr. Upadhyaya, and put up with us. Pandit Nehru had been with us before on several occasions, but this was Indira's first visit to our house. She looked frail and sickly at the time and bore little resemblance

1) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
2) An Italian journalist who was then on a visit to India
3) My mother, the late Bivabati Bose

to the vivacious Prime Minister of India that we know her now to be. She had, of course, not married then.

Pandit Nehru declined to meet Dr. Aponte possibly because he hailed from a fascist country. His party sailed for Burma on the day following.

Early in the second week of May, I got another letter from uncle written from Lahore on the 8th May, 1937, which is reproduced below

> "Both of your letters are to hand During my stay at Dalhousie, I shall be doing some writing work. In this connection, I shall require some more books I shall write to you from time to time about this Could you also procure for me relevant information from back copies of newspapers, reference books, etc. ? I mean, will you have time ? I want relevant information, in the first place, about Indian events from 1934 to 1937
>
> I am anxious to know if you could get fixed up somewhere Hope you are all well Do not reply to this until I write again I am sending this purposely by messenger
>
> P S. Did you meet Dr Aponte again after I left ?
>
> SCB "

As I had not till then got fixed up permanently anywhere, I had plenty of time to spare to collect the required materials for uncle, and I forwarded them to him at Dalhousie from time to time. Books and literature on politics, belles letters, history, and current affairs where requisitioned by him at regular intervals; general literature were also no exception Apart from the above, uncle continued to subscribe to and receive bulletins and journals of the *Foreign Policy Association,* U S A., *Foreign Affairs,* U S A., *International Affairs* (published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, U K.), *Times Weekly,* U.K., *New Statesman & Nation,* U.K., etc. He discontinued the *New Statesman & Nation* from June, 1937 Before doing so, he wrote to me as follows :

"There is one point on which I want to have your opinion I am thinking of discontinuing the *New Statesman* as it is rather expensive—and substituting a journal on International Affairs instead For 6 months, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* costs—6 6 d *The Times Weekly* —12.6 d and the *New Statesman* -/15/- Do you think that the *New Statesman* is worth this money ?"

Uncle returned from Dalhousie on the 7th October, much improved, though not fully restored, in health. He left Calcutta again on the 9th for Kurseong to spend a few days with us before plunging headlong into work. Father and ourselves, except my second brother, Amiya (who had left for England in the month of March), had already gone there on the 3rd Uncle spent most of his time in Kurseong discussing political affairs with father and hardly stirred out of doors. It was good that he did not then overstrain himself physically as he had extremely arduous work ahead of him. The meetings of the Congress Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee were scheduled to be held in Calcutta from the 26th to the 31st October, 1937 Father and uncle left for Calcutta on the 23rd October to attend those meetings. As mother had recently undergone a major surgical operation in the abdomen and was still in indifferent health, she was not able to go down with father, and most of us, brothers and sisters, therefore, stayed back with her

The meetings of the Congress Working Committee were held in our house in 1, Woodburn Park. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stayed in our house again during his visit to Calcutta for the Congress meetings. His sister, Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, who came to Calcutta a couple of days later to attend the meeting of the A. I. C. C also put up with us As mother was away in Kurseong, the duties of the household including that of

looking after the distinguished guests devolved on my sister, Mira, and cousin-sisters, Ila and Sheila, who were in Calcutta. It was not much of a problem to attend to Pandit Nehru and Mrs. Pandit, but the real problem was with Mahatma Gandhi and his retinue who arrived at the house when Pandit Nehru and Mrs. Pandit had already been staying as our guests.

Father had invited Mahatma Gandhi to be his guest during his visit to Calcutta and he had accepted the invitation. Mahatma Gandhi's retinue consisted of his Secretary, the late Mahadeb Desai, another Secretary, Mr. Pyarelal, his grandson, Kanu Gandhi, and his medical attendant, Dr. Sushila Nayyar. The entire second floor of the house in 1, Woodburn Park including the large open terrace was placed at his disposal. Mahadeb Desai used to be with the Mahatma almost constantly to attend to his important correspondence and to take notes of the interviews and discussions, the latter used to have with important persons. Mr Desai was so much in the Mahatma's confidence that he was rarely absent even when the latter held confidential discussions. Mr Pyarelal attended to the remaining correspondence and also supervised preparation of Mahatma's food and looked afer his comforts. Kanu Gandhi, on the other hand, was the Mahatma's nurse and attendant *par excellence* and indeed a very likeable person. But for Kanu Gandhi it would have been very difficult for us to conform scrupulously and with meticulous care to all the minutiae of Mahatma Gandhi's everyday life including his food We knew, of course, that the Mahatma shunned cow's milk and took goat's milk instead, but we did not know that he was fond of bread made of the finest flour. The bread, however, must be prepared at home, and Kanu Gandhi was an adept at that. The total number of items comprising the Mahatma's meal

at any one time must not exceed five. The mode of preparation of his food was simple, but the ingredients were among the choicest including the best fruits and vegetables of the season. One other thing which was noticeable was that the Mahatma used to take a lot of mashed garlic with his meals presumably to combat hypertension. This was the recipe he himself recommended to others for curing this malady. Another of his fads was to put a thick plaster of soil from the bed of the river Ganga round his head and keep it for hours on end to obtain relief from high blood pressure

Mother and ourselves returned to Calcutta on the 7th November when Mahatma Gandhi was still in our house We were all individually introduced to the Mahatma who greeted us affectionately, and made detailed enquiries of each of us—as to what we had studied or been studying and doing then. His conversations were very humorous and it was indeed a treat to listen to his conversations interspersed with jokes with Mrs Sarojini Naidu, who was then in Calcutta and used to call on him almost every day. But, at the same time, it was quite easy to annoy the Mahatma over certain minor things One of these was photography. While Mahatma Gandhi had no objection to being photographed, he would refuse to pose consciously for the camera. I did not know about this before and requested him one day in all humility to look at the camera while I was about to take his photo. He at once flew into a violent rage, got up and entered the bathroom shutting the door behind him and refused to come out till I had removed the camera.

The Mahatma's daily evening prayer session used to be an ordeal for us. The crowd that used to congregate was often well-nigh unmanageable and we were often hard put to it to maintain order and decorum, though it must be said that perfect silence was observed as soon

as the prayer commenced, and this was maintained till the end.

Mahatma Gandhi prolonged his stay in Calcutta after the Congress meetings in connection with his efforts to secure release of the political prisoners, still detained without trial on the plea of complicity in the terrorist movement, and also those convicted by Courts. He saw the Governor of Bengal and also the Ministers of the then Government several times He interviewed the Governor at the Government House at Barrackpore near Calcutta on the 9th November. The Ministers either he met at our house or at their houses. The Home Minister, Khawaja Nazimuddin, he met at the former's house, and subsequently he met all the Ministers at the residence of the late Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, who was then Minister for Finance. Mr. Sarkar had sometime ago beeen expelled from the Congress and thereafter joined the Muslim League Ministry. The Mahatma left us on the 17th November for Hijli to interview detenus lodged in that camp and thence proceeded to Wardah.

On the 12th November, I was told by my mother that uncle was likely to go to Europe again in the course of the next few days to undergo a course of treatment at Badgastein in Austria and was expected to return home in January next. He had not fully recovered his health after his stay in Dalhousie, which had to be curtailed on account of the ensuing visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Calcutta and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress Working Committee. Uncle found that the strain of work was proving a bit too much for him and felt the need for another spell of rest and change so as to make himself completely fit for the exacting duties that lay ahead of him. In an article*

*Uncle's article 'Through the Air' in *Hindusthan Standard* dated the 5th Dec., 1937.

he observed in this connection, "I felt that I would benefit more from a month's stay and treatment in a place like Badgastein (in Austria) than I would from a 3 to 4 months' stay at a hill station in India." A couple of days thereafter he came over to live in our Woodburn Park house so as to be near father for urgent consultations.

Uncle's passage was booked by Orientourist Ltd., a newly started Indian Tourist concern The Manager of their Calcutta Office happened to be Mr. Amiya Nath Sarkar, who complied with every formality in connection with the journey He made an appreciative reference to the service rendered by Orientourist Ltd. in the first instalment of the article he wrote for the *Hindusthan Standard* entitled "Through the Air."

Uncle left on the 18th November, 1937, for Europe by the K L.M plane Before boarding the plane,he took me aside and told me to collect certain materials for his autobiography which he proposed to write shortly. The previous evening he gave me letters for handing over to two gentlemen. He wrote to my mother and myself brief notes on flight (in Bengali), which are reproduced below:

> "Revered Mejobowdidi,
>
> You will see from my handwriting that I am flying in real comfort There have been still many more improvements in air travel during the last three years. I shall send a cable after arrival at Badgastein.
>
> Yours
> Subhas"

> "My dear Asoke,
>
> If you have been able to procure the press cutting on Demel* please send it to him You will be able

* Professor Demel, the famous Surgeon of Vienna, who operated on uncle in 1935.

to find out his address if you can get his tour programme from Dr. Kumud Sankar[1].

Please make some arrangement about the two letters concerning my autobiography, which I gave you last night Kalicharan[2] or Gopal Sanyal will be able to help you.

I require some materials for my autobiography, specially the history of our family. Will you be able to collect the same? It will be a good thing if you can make a note of the narrations you hear from your father and your Majanani and then send it on. Your father wishes to send some materials. Please get them from him and forward by air mail.

Yours

Rangakakababu"

P S. Please keep all my letters until my return. Do not redirect them.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived on the 26th November in the morning on his way to Assam. He rested for a few hours at our place and was joined at lunch by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who had arrived in the city, a few days earlier. The great savant, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, F.R S., died of heart failure three days before, i e., on the 23rd November at Giridih where he had gone for a change. His remains were brought down to Calcutta the next morning and cremated. After lunch, I took Pandit Nehru and Mrs. Naidu to Lady Abala Bose (widow of the late Acharya J C. Bose) at her house next to the Bose Institute. They called on the latter to express their condolence on her cruel bereavement. Pandit Nehru left for Assam shortly thereafter.

After settling down at Badgastein, uncle wrote to me again on the 1st December, 1937.

---

1) The late Dr. Kumud Sankar Roy.

2) Mr Kali Charan Ghosh, close friend of father and uncle. He hails from the same village.

Poste Restante
Badgastein, 1. 12 37

"My dear Asoke,

I have to bother you for a lot of things I hope you will have time to attend to them Please reply by air mail to as many points as possible.

1) What is our *'Parjaya'* ?[1] Is it 27th or 28th ? *'Parjaya'* means generation—so that your generation or *'Parjaya'* will be one more than mine. You can find out from Majanani.[2]

2) Please ask Kalicharan if he can give me any more materials about our ancestry and about our ancestral villages If so, he should hand them over to you Please send them by air mail (The materials he has already given me are very helpful).

3) Please take down notes from Majanani and Rangadadababu[3] about our family history on my mother's side and send them to me by air mail (e g my grandfather, great grandfather, how many children, sons-in-law, etc, they had and who they were etc, etc.)

4) Please send by air mail materials re my father's life They were collected at the time of the Sradh ceremony in January, 1935

5) If Prof Demel is invited to put up at Woodburn Park, Gairola who is touring as his Secretary, may put up at 38-2, Elgin Road in the guest room He can have meals together with Demel at Woodburn Park You will have to do your best for Demel in that case and make him feel at home

---

1) Denotes generation counted from the founder of the Bose family
2) Uncle's mother and the writer's grandmother, Mrs Prabhabati Bose
3) The late Mr B. N Dutt, uncle's maternal uncle

Gagan Vihari Mehta[1] wanted to give a tea-party in his honour He (Gagan) enquired of his address from me

6) Please let me know the Bengali equivalent of the current English Year and date
7) Was the Coronation of King George V as Emperor of India held in 1911 or 1912 in Delhi?
8) Please let me know the exact dates of the next Congress at Haripura They appeared in the papers of the 16th November or thereabouts The B P C C[2] office should know
9) Can you send me a decent photograph of my father and mother for reproduction in the book —also a decent group photo of the family and a separate photo of Mejdada? These may be sent by ordinary post—but as early as possible
10) You may remember that I asked you to get 3 issues of Modern Review in which my articles appeared They are to be sent by registered post to Mr Basil Mathews (author of the book—*India reveals herself*). You may send the parcel to him C/o the Publishers

I think I have given you enough work for the present—so I shall now stop
With love,

Yours v affly,
Subhas

Shortly after reaching Badgastein uncle wrote a most interesting account of his journey by air from Calcutta to Badgastein, the last lap from Naples to Badgastein being by train This was published in the 'Hindusthan Standard' of Calcutta serially on the 5th, 8th, 10th, and 12th December 1937 In the concluding sentences of his ar-

1) He was then head of the Scindia Steam Navigation Co. Ltd in Calcutta Subsequently he was appointed Indian Ambassador to U S A and thereafter a member of the Planning Commission
2) Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

ticle, uncle observed. "It is this combination of snow, sun, and dry cold which makes Switzerland and the West of Austria such a healthy place in winter. I had found just the weather I needed and the scenery I loved, and I was glad."

The weather, the scenery, and the radioactive warm mineral waters of Badgastein all had their magic effect on uncle's constitution which had again been somewhat run down during the last few weeks owing to excessive hard work and irregular hours of meal and sleep.

On the 16th December, I received another letter from uncle dated the 10th, on the subject of materials for his autobiography which said :

> "I am glad to have your letters of the 25th November and 30th Nov I have already received a packet of letters from Mejdada (written by me from England) The next packet (Burma letters) has not arrived yet—because it is coming by ordinary post Kali Charan gave me some very good material about Purandar Khan. I wonder if Nagen Babu* can give any more
>
> By the way I want a good photo of father and mother The *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* published a good photo of father when he died. These can come by ordinary mail I also want information about mother's forbears, i.e, Kasinath Dutt and others and their connection with other families like Sir Romesh Mitter, Sir N N Sircar Please note down this information and send it by air mail. I am surprised to find how little I know of these family connections
>
> Enclosed please find an article from Mrs. Fueloep-Miller for publication in the Modern Review Please hand it over to Sj Ramananda Chatterji at 20, Mullen Street (near our house) where he lives or at the Modern Review office Along with this, please hand over a photo of Prof. Heine Geldern

*The late Nagendra Nath Bose, the great scholar and historian

of Vienna which is lying in the room at 1, Woodburn Park where I was sleeping If you cannot find the photo in that room, please hand over the article only to Ramananda Chatterji. If you don't find the photo, don't bother please But if you do find the photo, please hand over the article and photo together to Ramananda Babu Please do this as soon as possible in order to be in time for the January number of M Review

Yours v. affly,
Subhas"

The letter was followed by two more, dated the 24th and the 29th December, respectively both sent by air mail. Relevant extracts from the former and the full text of the latter are reproduced below

"Your air mail letter of the 16th is to hand I have also received the manuscript note about our village and a cutting from a Bengali paper about father Many thanks"

Badgastein 29 12 37

"Your letter of the 21st reached me on the 28th inst Many thanks for the information of our ancestors on the maternal side

I am enclosing herewith 2 letters—to Sj Amal Home* and Sj Naresh Mookerjee The latter you can post to Naresh Babu Re the former, it is better for you to see Amal Babu personally and get him to send the photos or the blocks The photos should be sent by air mail If any photo is not available, then the block should be sent instead Amal Babu promised to send me the recent photo—but he has forgotten Please see him at the Municipal Office

Nothing more to write today I shall reach London on the 10th January and stay about a week

Yours very affly,
Subhas"

---

*Editor, *Calcutta Municipal Gazette,* recently deceased

Uncle started writing his autobiography under the title, *An Indian Pilgrim* in Badgastein in December, 1937, Word had been sent to Miss Emilie Schenkl, who as we have seen, had worked as his Secretary in 1934 when he wrote his *Indian Struggle 1920-1934* and also in 1935 to await uncle's arrival in Badgastein. I learned from uncle subsequently that he had never been able to do so much writing before in the short space of ten days as he could do at Badgastein in 1937 Years later in 1949 when I visited Europe again, the same was confirmed by Emilie who had by then became my aunt, and also by Mr. A.C N Nambiar (then Deputy Ambassador for India in Switzerland) who had visited uncle at Badgastein

While uncle was away in Europe, excitement started rising gradually over the election of the President of the next Congress session to be held in Gujarat in the third week in February, 1938. The general feeling in the country was that uncle should be unanimously elected President as a fitting tribute to his stupendous sacrifice and suffering for the cause of the country The radical or left-wing forces throughout the country were vociferous in their demand for uncle's election But the right-wing group under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership were yet to make up their minds and they were still in a majority in the Congress organization The acceptance of office by the Congress in seven of the eleven provinces had further consolidated their hold in the organization It was also known that uncle did not accept the tenets of Gandhism and would not join the Gandhi wing within the Congress for any reward, however great Ultimately, however, perhaps sensing the feeling in the country, Mahatma Gandhi and his followers decided to take a chance and to make the experiment of having uncle as Congress President for the year 1938 The term of the

President ran for one year only and in the event of uncle proving intransigent, they may, they thought, be able to throw him overboard in the following year. Thus, in January, 1938, uncle was unanimously elected President of the Congress and the news was cabled to him in England where he was at the time. Incidentally, the British Government in India permitted uncle to visit England in 1938, though such permission had been refused to him in the year 1933. In the course of his visit to England, he met members of the British Cabinet like Lord Halifax (formerly Lord Irwin, a former Viceroy of India) and Lord Zetland (formerly Lord Ronaldshay, a former Governor of Bengal and then the Secretary of State for India). Also, he met prominent members of the Labour and Liberal Parties who professed sympathy for India, such as Messrs Attlee (later Prime Minister of Britain), Arthur Greenwood, Ernest Bevin, Sir Stafford Cripps, Harold Laski, Lord Allen, and others President de Valera who happened to visit London at the time had also had a meeting with uncle

Miss Agatha Harrison, an English lady who was very sympathetic to India's aspirations and consistently worked for proper representation of India's case for self-government before the British public, arranged for the meeting of Lord Halifax with uncle at a country house near London during uncle's visit to England in January, 1938 Miss Harrison, who used to invite me often to her house in Battersea Park in London during my stay there in 1936, visited India shortly after the Haripura Congress in 1938 She was asked to lunch by father during her visit to Calcutta when she showed us the letter she had received from Lord Halifax appreciating the arrangements she had made for him to meet uncle. Lord Halifax wrote therein that although he was not able to find any common ground with uncle, nevertheless, he was greatly

impressed by discussions with the latter.

A most tragic event occurred in India during uncle's absence abroad. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the greatest novelist and short story writer of Bengal, nay India, after Tagore, died on the 16th January, 1938, in Calcutta, after a short but painful illness. The loss to Bengali literature was irreparable Sarat Chandra had had great affection for uncle and been a consistent supporter of the latter in the political field. He would not hesitate to come out of his secluded corner and participate in political meetings and discussions whenever requests to that effect went forth from uncle He attended the session of the Congress held in Lahore 1929 as a member of the All-India Congress Committee His dislike of Mahatma Gandhi and his political philosophy was intense, and he strongly held the view that Gandhian methods could not and would not lead to independence

Uncle returned from Europe on the 24th January, 1938 He appeared bright and cheerful and fully confident of being able to stand the strain of arduous work that lay ahead of him.

It has been mentioned before that considerable realignment of groups and parties in the Bengal Congress had been taking place since 1935—a process which still continued till the beginning of 1938. Some of the erstwhile lieutenants of uncle chose to part company with him about this time On the other hand, many of the prominent erstwhile opponents of uncle, who had formerly been staunch supporters of the late Mr. J. M. Sengupta, now joined hands with uncle. Prominent among these were the so-called 'Ananda Bazar Patrika Group' headed by their chief, the late Suresh Chandra Majumdar The orthodox Gandhiites—the so-called 'Khadi' group—took up an attitude of benevolent neutrality

There was a lot of comings and goings of political leaders, and on the 26th January, we were greatly intrigued to see Dr B. C. Roy, Mr Nalini Ranjan Sarkar and Mr. Ghanashyamdas Birla call at 38/2, Elgin Road where uncle had been staying, for a closed-door discussion with uncle and father. Dr B C Roy had then been in temporary retirement from politics, the Congress High Command having chosen father as the leader of the Congress in Bengal in 1936 Mr Nalini Ranjan Sarker who had turned a renegade during the elections in 1936 was eager to come back to the Congress fold as the country had reverted to parliamentary politics. Mr. G. D. Birla had been one of the principal financiers of Mahatma Gandhi and was no doubt keen on having a hand in Bengal politics as well. He or his brother, Mr. B. M. Birla, and, for that matter, other members of his family, had not then taken to European costume, but went about attired in *'dhoti'* or *'chooridar pyjama'* and long coat buttoned up to the neck and wearing the typical turban of their community. As uncle was President-elect of the ensuing session of the Congress, this was an additional reason for Birlas trying to be on his right side.

Early in February, uncle enquired of me whether I could accompany him to Haripura in Gujarat, the venue of the Congress session that year. As I had no whole-time employment at the time, I readily agreed—in fact I was delighted A couple of days before he started for Haripura, Mr. John Gunther (author of *Inside Europe)* had called on uncle and had a long interview with him. Mr Gunther was then visiting India to collect materials for his forthcoming book, *Asia from Inside.* Mr. Gunther was very keen on having a copy of uncle's book, *Indian Struggle, 1920-1934,* but as the book, had been banned entry into India, it was not avail-

able in the country. Nor had it been possible for uncle to bring a single copy with him when he returned home in 1936, or again on his return last month from Europe as the ban still continued. Uncle was, however, aware that I had managed to smuggle in a few copies of the book at the time I returned from Europe in 1937, after completion of my studies, out of which only one copy remained with me, the others having already been given away by me one by one, to important persons who asked for the book. In fact, whenever an important visitor requested uncle for a copy of his book, he used to send for me and asked me to spare one from my stock. I remember having presented a copy earlier to the well-known foreign correspondent of *News Chronicle* of London, Mr. Vernon Bartlett, when he called on uncle and father sometime ago. I had no option but to part with the last copy—rather reluctantly—when uncle asked me to present the same to Mr. Gunther

Uncle started for Haripura on the 11th February, 1938, by the Bombay Mail via Nagpur The party consisted of uncle, another gentleman who hailed from Uttar Pradesh but who was domiciled in Bengal, whose name I have now forgotten and who used to give lessons to uncle in the Hindi and Urdu languages, and myself Uncle had by then picked up Hindi and Urdu very well and could speak both the languages fluently and faultlessly. The gentleman who had been his tutor in Hindi and Urdu was taken along to help uncle with his correspondence, notes, etc., in Hindi and Urdu, and I to help in his routine correspondence in English and Bengali and also to attend to his personal needs. A second class compartment on the train had been reserved for uncle and his party and the compartment was decorated with national flags, etc., which served to distinguish it from the rest of the train. At every station the train

stopped on its way to Bombay, there were huge and cheering crowds, and uncle everywhere addressed a few words to them Neither uncle nor we could have much sleep during our journey, but it was an unforgettable experience. On the 13th February, uncle and party were taken off at Dadar (a suburb of Bombay) and conducted to the house of a prominent local Congressman for a wash and brush-up and breakfast. After a couple of hours, we boarded the special train which took us to Navasari where we detrained. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Darbar Gopaldas Desai (Chairman of the Reception Committee), and others received uncle there

Haripura, the venue of the Congress, was a small village situated several miles away from the rail-head. A temporary two-lane motor road had been built in record time to connect Haripura with Navasari. From the rail-head to Haripura, the President-elect was taken in a huge procession on a chariot drawn by fifty-one selected bullocks By the time we reached the Congress camp, it was past dusk The village had, we were told, recently received electricity on the occasion of the Congress session. For accommodation of the delegates and leaders, a very large number of temporary huts, big and small, had been constructed. The huts were provided with bathrooms, but lavatories were situated at some distance For meals we had to go to the community dining halls. All other arrangements were as perfect as could be made in a village The meals provided were entirely vegetarian, but were wholesome and up to the best standard of Gujarati cooking. The President's party was accommodated in two large huts and subsequently one more hut was placed at our disposal. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was given another large hut opposite the President's , and Mrs Sarojini Naidu's was beside that of Pandit Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi's

camp was some distance away and so were some others for other leaders. The Ford Motor Company of India had placed a large fleet of brand-new Ford V8 cars at the disposal of the Reception Committee and two such cars were earmarked for the President and his party.

The idea that we would have to live on strictly vegetarian diet for days on end was not such as to appeal to our culinary tastes An escapade on the day following our arrival, led to the discovery of a grocery outside the Congress enclosure, kept by a Muslim where one could buy fresh eggs. I managed to procure a few eggs every day and smuggle them inside the camp I knew that Mrs Sarojini Naidu longed for eggs for breakfast, and for that matter, non-vegetarian food in general. So I spared a few out of the lot for her and her daughter, Miss Padmaja Naidu (later on Governor of West Bengal, since deceased), who were delighted to receive them. My escapades could not, however, continue for more than a couple of days as these came to uncle's notice whereupon he gave me a stern rebuke. He told me if I were not able to conform to the discipline of the camp and refrain from non-vegetarian diet even for a few days, I could take the next train back home He was a stickler for discipline and believed in the maxim, 'When you go to Rome do as the Romans do' Further, he not only believed firmly in national integration, but practised it in everyday life In accordance therewith, he would invariably accept the hospitality of people of the state or province he visited and not of Bengalis living or domiciled in that state or province. The volunteer force raised on the occasion of the Congress at Haripura did not give much evidence of training and discipline except of course, the women's corps under the command of the late Miss Mridulaben Sarabhai

The session of the Congress started with meetings of

the Congress Working Committee on the 15th February. This was followed by meetings of the All India Congress Committee and the Subjects Committee. Those who played important roles in the deliberations of the Congress at Haripura were the late Bhulabhai Desai, Prof. N. G Ranga (now a leader of the Swatantra Party), the late Vallabhbhai Patel, and, of course, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. From Bengal, only Mr. Sibnath Banerjee and later on, father actively participated in the deliberations. Father arrived at Haripura with my grandmother and mother and a few other members of the family on the 18th February. My uncle, Mr Sailesh Chandra Bose, with his family had arrived at Haripura a couple of days earlier.

The open session of the Congress commenced on the 19th February, 1938, in the evening under the open sky. Uncle read his address in faultless Hindi and subsequently read extracts therefrom in English. The presidential address was a reflection of uncle's clear thinking on national as well as international affairs. On the role of the Congress, he observed, "The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction Only those who have won power, can handle it properly," and, further "There can be no question of the Congress Party withering away after political freedom has been won." This was contrary to Mahatma Gandhi's views on the subject. On the subject of reconstruction after independence, uncle said that "The very first thing which our future national government will have to do, would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and a long-period programme." Coming to the question of a common script, he was, he

said, "inclined to think that the ultimate solution and the best solution would be the adoption of a script that would bring us into line with the rest of the world." The Government of Free India have only recently started their programme for population control—it took them more than fifteen years to realise the enormity of the problem. But as early as in 1938, uncle had declared unequivocally from the tribune of the Congress that "the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population" In regard to foreign policy uncle advocated realistic, down-to-earth methods He added that "The first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state," and further, that, "in this matter we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy ' His further observations on foreign policy had a prophetic ring about them as for example, "In the years to come international developments will favour our struggle in India But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it"

The Congress session at Haripura was concluded on the 22nd February, 1938, amid great enthusiasm The names of members of the new working Committee were announced by the President at the concluding session of the All-India Congress Committee on that day As expected, father was selected from Bengal. For the first time in the history of the Congress, two members of the Congress Socialist Party were taken into the Committee Another notable inclusion was that of Mr Hare Krushna Mahatab from Orissa It was the first time that a member from Orissa had been taken in the Committee The members of our family except myself headed by my parents left Haripura for Cal-

cutta on the 23rd February in the morning I remained behind to accompany uncle to Bombay

Uncle and our party left Haripura in the evening on the 23rd February On the 24th, early in the morning, we detrained at Dadar and rested there for a couple of hours. A special train drew up at Dadar at 7-30 A M and took uncle to Bombay (Victoria Terminus). From the Victoria Terminus station, uncle was taken through the city to the office of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee More than two lakhs of people participated in the presidential procession. The boss of the Bombay Congress at that time was Mr. S. K. Patil, who later on became a member of the Parliament and a Minister of the Government of India Mr Patil is now a prominent leader of the Organisation Congress. We put up with Mr and Mrs Nathalal Parekh at their residence near Chowpatty Sands. Their hospitality was as lavish as it was magnificent.

Uncle had a most crowded programme in Bombay He addressed two or three mass meetings every day, held at different places in the city and suburbs by turn, which were attended by lakhs of people, the largest one being at Azad Maidan on the 27th February I used to accompany him to all the meetings and also to lunch and dinner invitations which were equally numerous Apart from the Chief Minister of Bombay at the time, the late B. G. Kher, and the Home Minister, the late K M Munshi, I remember having accompanied uncle to the homes of the late Bhulabhai Desai, the late Krishna Hutheesingh (younger sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru), the late K F Nariman, and others. The way his programme in Bombay was organized proved that the Congress organization in Bombay was not only efficient but extremely resourceful. The

credit for this should go to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the first place.

Uncle returned to Calcutta on the 10th March, 1938. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee organized a procession on the occasion, but it was a miserable show that they put up Hardly had uncle settled down in Calcutta when the sensational news of occupation of Austria by the German troops and the country's incorporation into Greater Germany was announced in the Press. The incorporation or union or what was termed '*Anschluss*' (in German) was effected on the 14th March 1938

Mahatma Gandhi and party arrived in Calcutta on the 17th March, 1938, and put up with us. Strenuous efforts were made by orthodox Gandhiites and Birlas themselves to persuade the Mahatma to stay at the Birla Park (the palatial mansion of Birlas), but somehow they failed to persuade the Mahatma to change his mind. On the 22nd March, Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore came to our house to meet the Mahatma The poet had of late aged considerably and walked with a slight stoop. Because of the Poet's state of health, Mahatma Gandhi came downstairs to meet the former. The Mahatma bent down and took the dust of Tagore's feet and then talked with the Poet for about an hour

Mahatma Gandhi left Calcutta on the 24th March, but returned on the 1st April, 1933 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived in Calcutta on the same day Both of them stayed with us in 1, Woodburn Park. The first meeting of the Congress Working Committee under uncle's presidentship was held in Calcutta on the 1st April, 1938, at 38/2, Elgin Road where uncle was staying then Pandit Nehru left Calcutta after the meeting of the Congress Working Committee, but the

Mahatma stayed on till the middle of the month in connection with the negotiations that had been initiated by him with the Government of Bengal for the release of the detenus imprisoned without trial and other political prisoners. Early in the same month, I left Calcutta for Jamadoba under the postal jurisdiction of Jealgora near Dhanbad in Bihar to take up a permanent appointment. From then onwards for the next ten years I remained in the Jharia Coalfield area of Bihar, for the first one and a half years at a place called Jamadoba and thereafter at Bararee Coke except for short visits to, and holidays spent either in, Calcutta or other places. However, I continued to remain in close touch with uncle.

After his release from prison in 1937, uncle had tentatively shifted his residence to 38/2, Elgin Road, On his return from Haripura, he decided to reside there permanently. He was allotted the same bedroom as had been used by his father. A sitting room, a waiting room for visitors, and a study were fixed up and furnished. Also, a guest-room with attached bathroom was set apart for his guests As in spite of all the above modifications, certain arrangements in the house were still not wholly satisfactory, important and closed-door meetings, conferences, or entertainments, continued to be held in 1, Woodburn Park My. grandmother who lived in 38/2, Elgin Road had grown too old to oversee all the details of housekeeping, and therefore, the real day-to-day work of looking after uncle fell to the lot of my cousin-sister, Ila From that time onwards till his departure from Calcutta in January, 1941, Ila filled the dual role of uncle's principal private secretary and nurse and served him with untiring zeal and single-minded devotion

From June, 1938, onwards, I started looking for a

suitable match for myself as I had decided to marry soon. Among several girls I met, one was particularly recommended to me on the ground that the family was politically-minded and known to uncle very well. It was, further, given out that uncle would welcome my choosing her as my wife. This was somewhat surprising to me as I have had some inkling of uncle's views on marriage in the course of my discussions with him from time to time in Europe and subsequently on his return to India, on social problems in general and on the problem of marriage in particular. I, therefore, addressed a letter to him on the 7th July, 1939, seeking clarification of his views on matrimony in general and on the selection of the girl referred to in particular He wrote back almost immediately after explaining his standpoint The relevant extracts from the letter are quoted below:

38/2, Elgin Road
8 7 38

"Your letter My own views on matrimony are quite at variance with those of orthodox Hindu Society.

"You were right in not marrying before you started earning It is now time for you to get married— if you think of doing so at all.

"Men and women should have perfect freedom in the choice of their life's partner Others may only advise

"Personally I think and feel that matrimony should follow a period of friendship and intimacy I am against "arranged" marriages which are in vogue in our society.

"It does not matter in the least if any member of the family is upset over your marrying a "Maulik" girl.

"Lastly, I hold that before men and women marry they should study at least one good book on sex and its problems. One should not walk into matrimoney quite ignorant of sex and its many problems

"So, now you know my views on marriage"

The above letter of uncle was, I knew, fully in accord with the views held by him on the subject and helped me in making my choice of my life's partner.

Meanwhile, uncle, as Congress President, started and carried on a raging and tearing campaign throughout the length and breadth of the country to stiffen the opposition of the Congress to any compromise with Britain. This caused great annoyance to the older leaders owing allegiance to Mahatma Gandhi, who were looking forward to an understanding with the British Government, which would ultimately result in their becoming Cabinet Ministers These leaders were tired of moving in to and out of prison at intervals and were anxious for a spell of power to be enjoyed in comfort After the Munich Pact, in September, 1938, which resulted in virtual dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, uncle started what he termed in his own words, "an open propaganda throughout India in order to prepare the Indian people for a national struggle, which should synchronize with the coming war in Europe." As a keen student of international politics, uncle had visualised even in 1938 that a war would break out in Europe within the next twelve months and hence he tried to educate the people from then onwards on the supreme necessity of taking advantage of such a golden opportunity.

Long after independence, certain people had the impudence to claim that it was they who had tried to impress on uncle and had ultimately succeeded in con-

vincing him, though he would not initially accept their argument that war would engulf Europe in 1939. In the face of uncle's presidential address in Haripura and subsequent statements on the international situation, no notice of such ludicrous statements need be taken. It may not be generally known that some of those very same persons did in fact play a most ignoble role and accepted assignments of hired propagandists for Britain when war actually broke out. However, uncle's move was greatly resented by Gandhiites and the Right wing of the Congress, who were apprehensive of their ministerial and parliamentary apple-cart being overturned. Towards the end of the year 1938, uncle launched the National Planning Committee for drawing up a comprehensive plan of industrialization and of national development, and the Chairmanship of the Committee was offered by uncle to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This, in his words, "caused further annoyance to Mahatma Gandhi who was opposed to industrialization."*

Besides the difference in outlook on the issues of compromise with Britain and methods of national reconstruction, there was another issue which had not then come to the surface but which, nevertheless, caused a breach between uncle and the Gandhi Wing This was about the foreign contacts that uncle had been able to establish in Europe and elsewhere In spite of all tall talks about complete national independence, the Gandhi Wing were not actually wedded to the idea and could not therefore visualize the overthrow of the British or forcible seizure of power from them. All that the Gandhi Wing could envisage was a gradual transfer of power by the British following upon a mass movement conducted strictly by 'peaceful and non-violent means' Uncle's

* *Indian Struggle—1935-1942*, **Pp 19.**

views on the methods of attainment of independence were, therefore considered too heretical for orthodox 'non-violent' Congressmen About a couple of months before the election of the President of the Congress for the year 1939 fell due, that is in January, 1939, the breach between uncle and the Gandhi Wing had become so wide that the parting of the ways appeared inevitable.

Earnest and sincere efforts were, however, made not only by the leading members of the progressive groups and radical wings of the Congress, but eminent scientists like Sir Prafulla Chandra Roy and Professor Dr. Meghnad Saha, and above all, the Poet himself for uncle's re-election as President for a second term.

Some leading members of the then Congress Socialist Party* like Messrs Sazzad Zaheer, Z. A. Ahmed, P Rammurthy, P. Sundaraya, and E M. S Namboodiripad issued a statement on the 17th October demanding uncle's re-election. Very soon thereafter—on the 22nd October—the Nationalist Muslim leaders of Bengal including Professor Humayun Kabir, Nawabzada Syed Hasan Ali Choudhury, Moazzem Ali Choudhury, Abu Hossain Sarkar, Abul Mansur Ahmed, and Rashid Khan made the same demand. On the 7th November, Sir Prafulla Chandra Roy, the doyen of the Indian scientists, in a statement published in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta on the day following, declared :

> "Having thought over the matter deeply and after considering the current national and international political situation, I have come to the conclusion that Subhas Chandra Bose is the fittest person for the presidentship of the Congress at the present time.

* Some of the members named above subsequently joined the Communist Party of India and lent active assistance to the British Government in India in their war effort.

[illegible]

9. Letter dated 8th July 1938
(Ref. Pages 161-62)

[illegible]

[illegible] he [illegible]

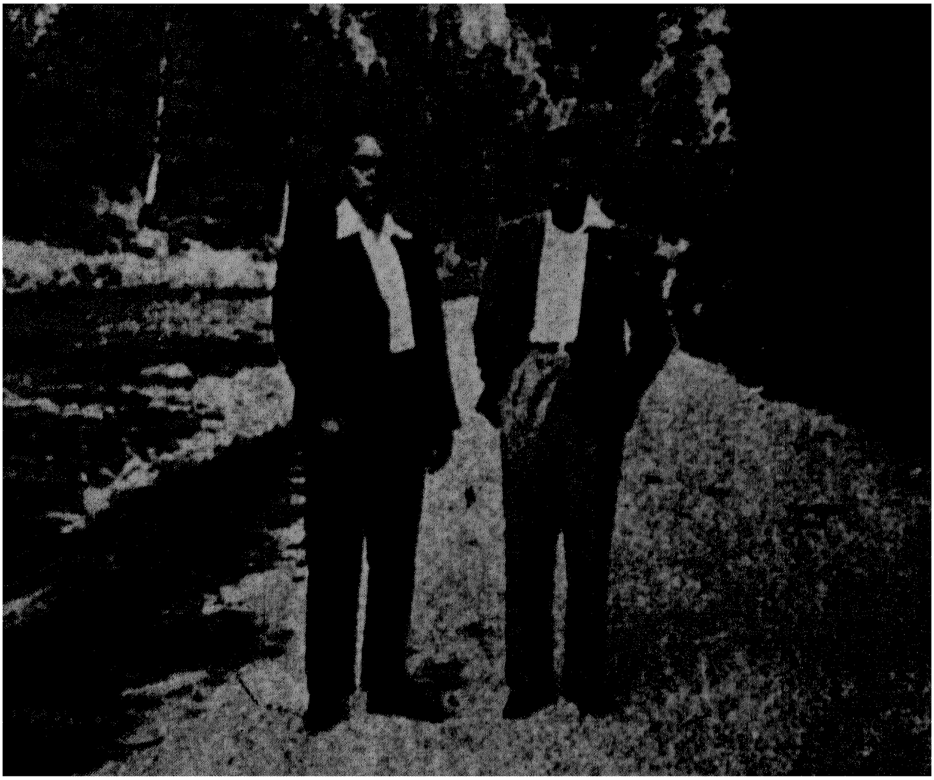
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10. With the author in Karlsbad in
1935 (Ref. P. 121)

I earnestly appeal to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress High Command to seriously consider the advisability of letting Subhas Chandra continue as President for another year."

One other fact which is not widely known is about the very important role played by Dr. Meghnad Saha in this connection Dr. Saha approached Poet Rabindranath with the request to write to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru urging uncle's re-election, Professor Saha who had been nominated a member of the National Planning Committee set up by the Congress in October felt very strongly that uncle's election was imperative if planning were to be made a reality. He saw the Poet several times in Santiniketan to impress this on the latter

The Poet who had himself been giving serious thought to the matter thereupon deputed one of his Secretaries, Mr. Sudha Kanta Roy Choudhury, in December with a letter to Mahatma Gandhi at Wardah requesting him to favourably consider uncle's re-election in the context of the current political situation in the country At the same time, the Poet wrote to Pandit Nehru on the same lines and had personal discussions with the latter on the subject during his visit to Santiniketan shortly thereafter Mahatma Gandhi in a letter to Pandit Nehru confirmed receipt of the Poet's letter delivered to him by Mr. Roy Choudhury and the fact of having sent his reply thereto and also having advised Pandit Nehru to communicate his own views to the Poet on the subject.*

All efforts to secure uncle's unanimous re-election ultimately proved futile as Mahatma Gandhi and his followers had already made up their minds not to have uncle re-elected for a second term, and proposed instead

* Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of old Letters*, Pp. 270-71.

the names of Maulana Azad* and Dr Pattabhi Sitaramya as candidates for presidentship On the other hand, uncle was determined to contest for the post on the definite issue of serving an ultimatum to the British Government demanding independence within six months and at the same time of preparing the country for a national struggle In a press statement shortly before the election, he declared that "all sense of false modesty will have to be put aside for the issue in not a personal one" adding that, "the presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes."

* Maulana Azad withdrew his candidature on the 20th January, 1939, in favour of Dr Pattabhi Sitaramya

CHAPTER NINE

1939-40
Triumph and Tribulations

The next session of the Indian National Congress was due to be held at Tripuri, a village near Jubbulpore in the Central Provinces (or what is now known as Madhya Pradesh), about the second week of March, 1939 It was announced that the election of the President would be held in January, 1939. According to then constitution of the Congress, all the delegates, elected to the Congress, who in their turn had been elected by the primary members of the body all over India, constituted the electorate. This time uncle's election was not going to be uncontested, as the Gandhi Wing had set up Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramya as their candidate, and their entire resources had been mobilised in favour of the latter The polling had been fixed in the last week of January On the eve of the polling, seven members of the Congress Working Committee—Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Messrs Bhulabhai Desai, Jairamdas Daulatram and Shankar Rao Deo, and last but not the least, Mr Rajagopalachari issued a statement asking the delegates to vote for Dr.

Sitaramya Pandit Nehru at that stage did not openly associate himself with the seven members named above, but was in fact working against uncle's election On the 28th January, the *Statesman* of Calcutta published a statement alleged to have been made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that he was going to throw in his weight against uncle's election The statement was not contradicted.

Among those who proposed uncle's name for election were Messrs. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (now President of India), Gopinath Bardoloi (the then Chief Minister of Assam), Bishnuram Medhi, Siddhinath Sarma, and ten other members from amongst the Bengal delegates A notable role in the election was played by the late Rafi Ahmed Kidwai who was then a Minister of the Congress Government of the then United Provinces (now known as Uttar Pradesh) He was alone amongst members of his cabinet, who worked most actively for uncle and was responsible for the majority of the votes from his province cast in favour of the latter. The Left Wing groups, of course, voted en bloc for uncle.

On the 29th January, results of polling started pouring in and the telephone in 1, Woodburn Park remained engaged for hours at a stretch receiving messages about election from different parts of the country.

My wedding took place on the 27th January, 1939, and was graced by uncle's active presence from the beginning to end, and on the 29th, father gave a big reception for his friends and relations at the South Club adjacent to our house to meet my wife and myself. The chief topic for discussion at the reception was the result of the Congress presidential election Among the numerous guests present at the party, there were a large number of Congressmen who had voted against uncle at the election. One gentleman whose name I cannot recall

now, but who was personally on the very best of terms with uncle, though opposed to him in politics, in the course of a discussion at the reception with uncle told him that the latter would be defeated by a large majority Uncle thereupon took out a piece of paper and a pencil and scribbled thereon his estimate of the analysis of voting, province by province, and told the gentleman concerned that he would win by a comfortable majority At 10 P M. a message was received at our house from the headquarters of the Congress in Allahabad confirming uncle's victory. The detailed results of the election when received confirmed more or less uncle's own analysis of voting given to the gentleman referred to above

On the 3rd February, father and uncle left for Jalpaiguri in North Bengal to attend the Bengal Provincial Conference that was being held there. At that conference over which father presided, a resolution, recommending to the Congress that the British Government should be immediately served with an ultimatum demanding independence within six months, was passed by an overwhelming majority. Father who presided over the conference himself advocated such a step in his address.

On receipt of the news of uncle's victory in the presidential election, Mahatma Gandhi in a statement characterized Dr Pattabhi's defeat as his own defeat. There was no doubt it was so and more—the election had served to demonstrate to the world clearly and unmistakably the wide and influential following uncle had throughout the country in opposition to both the Mahatma and Pandit Nehru. But the latter part of the Mahatma's statement was as amazing as it was mischievous He added "After all Subhas Babu is not an enemy of the country" The saint of Sabarmati and Sevagram was not a person to take his defeat lying down and

word soon went forth that this should be avenged fully at the Tripuri session of the Congress due to be held towards the second week of March, 1939.

In the third week of February, that is, on the eve of the Congress, uncle fell seriously ill with broncho-pneumonia He was making slow progress towards recovery when he suffered a relapse which held him in its grip for weeks on end. On 24th February, while he was lying prostrate in Calcutta, thirteen members of the Congress Working Committee including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru tendered their resignation of their membership. Pandit Jawaharlal issued a separate statement expressing his inability to co-operate with uncle even in his individual capacity. The stage had thus been well set to humiliate the President of the Congress at the congress session itself. Uncle, however, resolved to go to Tripuri, come what may, and advocate with all the force at his command the policy which he felt should be adopted by the Congress Basing his calculations on the results of the election of the President, he was confident of being able to carry the majority with him All that he, therefore, requested of the Reception Committee, was a postponement of the session by a week so that he may recover to some extent and be fit to travel. The request of the President was not complied with. I met uncle in Calcutta on the 4th March and found him still running very high temperature with extreme prostration. Nevertheless, he was determined to go to Tripuri. His condition remained the same when he left on the day following accompanied by my grandmother and my physician uncle, Dr Sunil Chandra Bose, and, of course, my cousin-sister, Ila. Father left for Tripuri on the 6th March and other family-members including my mother on the 8th March I was unable to go as I could not get leave from my employers.

Uncle's illness took a turn for the worse in Tripuri so much so that he could not read out his address even while lying in bed, and it was, therefore, read out by father on his behalf at the Congress. The arrangements made at Tripuri by the Reception Committee were not only miserable, but positively disgraceful. Far from attending to the needs and convenience of the President, the Reception Committee went to the length of doing things calculated to wound his susceptibilities and those of our family-members. For one thing, the Reception Committee would not believe that uncle was at all ill and thought it was only a clever ruse to draw the sympathy of the delegates The food served to him was so atrocious that arrangements had to be made by our family to have it prepared and brought from outside. Verily. the organisers of the Tripuri Congress set an example which to this day had not been matched by the organisers of any other Congress session held previously or subsequent thereto

In his Presidential address at Tripuri uncle put forward the clear proposal that the Indian National Congress should immediately send an ultimatum to the British Government demanding independence within six months and should simultaneously prepare for a mass struggle This proposal was opposed by the Gandhi Wing and by Pandit Nehru and was thrown out. This amounted to rejection of uncle's leadership by the Congress As a counter-blast to uncle's proposal, a resolution was moved on behalf of the Gandhi Wing by the late Pandit Govinda Ballabh Pant expressing complete faith in Mahatma Gandhi and his policy and directing the President to nominate his Working Committee according to the wishes of the Mahatma The Gandhi Wing was prepared to tolerate uncle only as a puppet President and no more The resolution was passed by

a majority in the Subjects Committee and was finally ratified at the open session of the Congress as a result of a division in the ranks of the Left Wing or the radical elements and vacillation on the part of the Congress Socialist Party which remainded neutral at the time of voting. The disintegration of the Congress Socialist Party actually started from Tripuri Uncle did not resign office at Tripuri, and deferred doing so till he had exhausted the possibility of a compromise by direct negotiations with Mahatma Gandhi, who had gone to Rajkot before the Tripuri Congress and chosen to remain there during and after the Congress leaving it to his followers to do the needful at Tripuri.

When at the end of the Congress session, uncle left Tripuri, his state of health continued to be such as to cause real anxiety. It was, therefore, decided by father in consultation with Dr Sunil Bose and other physicians at Tripuri that uncle should be taken down at Dhanbad on his way to Calcutta and taken to Jamadoba-Jealgora where one of my other uncles, the late Sudhir Chandra Bose (who belonged to the staff of Messrs Tata Iron & Steel Co, Ltd), was then posted. I myself was then employed in that area and was living with this uncle at Jamadoba-Jealgora This place was situated at a distance of about nine miles from the railhead at Dhanbad in the Bihar Coalfields and enjoyed a dry and healthy climate My uncle's bungalow was nice and spacious and had all modern conveniences It was essential that visitors to uncle Subhas should be kept out as much as possible so as to lessen undue strain and afford uncle the much-needed rest and thus help in his rapid recovery Jamadoba was, therefore, chosen as the place for his convalescence

On the 13th March, I received father's talegram from Tripuri asking me to meet uncle at the Dhanbad

railway station on the 14th in the morning and make all necessary arrangements for taking him and the party to Jamadoba As my uncle, the late Sudhir Chandra Bose, had gone to Tripuri with his family and was not expected to return before the 14th March, the necessary arrangements had to be made by me. Accordingly, uncle was put down at Dhanbad and brought over to Jamadoba He looked very pale and completely exhausted as he had till then not been able to shake off the fever. Both my grandmother and cousin-sisters, Ila and Shela, got off along with him and come over to Jamadoba.

On the 16th morning, the newspapers announced the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and setting up of the socalled independent state of Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia I had a talk with uncle the same evening on the events in Europe. He was of the view that this was Hitler's last stroke so far as Czechoslovakia was concerned but that there was no reason to think that Hitler would stop at the annexation and dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Within a few days thereafter, Germany annexed Memel from Lithuania.

During uncle's stay in Jamadoba, I used to spend almost every evening after return from work at his bedside. He welcomed discussion on national and international politics and encouraged me to develop proper arguments for viewpoints held by me. He told me that the then situation in Europe was fraught with grave peril and that war may break out in the course of the next few months. The Gandhi Wing, he added, had no comprehension of coming international developments and were looking forward eagerly to a compromise with Britain so that they may get dominion status without a national struggle. After about ten days' stay in Jamadoba, uncle felt a little better and then started attending

to urgent correspondence.

He was then still too weak to sit up in bed for long and had to dictate his correspondence. As he had at the time no Secretary worth the name, the choice of taking dictations fell on me Moreover, much of his correspondence at that period was of a very confidential nature and not everybody could be trusted with them I had attended to his correspondence during his stay in Europe in the 'thirties and also subsequently, and earned his trust. Practically all the correspondence carried on by uncle with Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru from Jamadoba were dictated to me The correspondence with the Mahatma consisted of thirty-four telegrams and thirteen letters exchanged between them, which were published in full in *Hindusthan Standard* of Calcutta. dated the 14th May 1939 Uncle's correspondence with Pandit Nehru from Jamadoba-Jealgora were included by the latter in his *Bunch of Old Letters.* The long letter uncle addressed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the 28th March was likewise dictated to me As I did not know stenography, the dictations were taken down by me in long-hand, fair copies thereof were made and letters written by my hand were posted to the addresses Only a few of the letters and telegrams were typed out in my portable typewriter On the 25th March, 1939, uncle issued a most dignified statement to the press explaining his position visa-vis the formation of the Working Committee, and thereafter started lengthy correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi. In his letter to the Mahatma on the 31st March, uncle asked the former to let him know his own reaction to the Pant resolution The Mahatma in his reply dated the 2nd April parried the question and did not give a categorical reply. About this time also, from his sickbed in Jamadoba, he wrote a remarkable article, entitled, "My

Strange Illness", which was published in the *Modern Review* in its issue of April, This is reproduced in Appendix III.

To Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, uncle wrote his famous long letter on the 28th March, 1939. The contents thereof were remarkable for their brutal frankness. In the matter of foreign policy, uncle did not mince matters and wrote: "Foreign policy is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self-interest Frothy sentiments and pious platitudes do not make foreign policy. It is no use championing lost causes all the time and it is no use condemning countries like Germany and Italy on the one hand and on the other, giving a certificate of good conduct to British and French Imperialism." This was hitting the nail right on the head. Pandit Nehru's reply which was dated the 3rd April was rather mild in tone. He admitted therein his various drawbacks and also his mental unpreparedness for taking up a stand in opposition to Mahatma Gandhi and other veteran leaders of the Congress

In the course of a further discussion I had with uncle on the 30th March, he remarked that the then lull in Europe was only apparent and that Germany was bound to make her next move before long. He often exclaimed if only the Congress had given an ultimatum to Britain, the effect would have been far-reaching. But he added that the so-called "old guards" were so obsessed with the idea of taking revenge on him that they had lost all powers of thinking objectively.

On the 6th April, 1939, Babu Rajendra Prasad, one of the strongest pillars of the Gandhi Wing (and later President of the Republic of India) called on uncle at Jamadoba for a discussion. The same day uncle issued a statement to; the press explaining that

he was bound by the Pant resolution and that if he were unable to give effect to it, he would adopt the constitutional course of resigning the presidentship. Mr. Satya Ranjan Bakshi arrived the same evening for a discussion with uncle. This was followed by the visit on the 10th April of the late Kiran Sankar Roy, then Secretary, Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party (and later a Minister of the Government of West Bengal) On his return to Calcutta, Mr. Roy decided to shift his allegiance from uncle to the Gandhi Wing. Mr. Roy, who had been one of the most valued co-workers of uncle since 1921, told me frankly in the course of an intimate conversation, that he might ere long be obliged to part company with the latter owing to political differences It appeared that Mr. Roy was feeling scared of uncle's policies and methods which were too radical for him. Dr. B. C. Roy, who had temporarily retired from the political field in 1931 and made an unsuccessful attempt to make a re-entry in 1936 when the Congress adopted the parliamentary programme was also waiting in the wings at this time to announce his readiness to come out in the open as it appeared that uncle and father might have to leave Congress very soon. Maulavi Ashrafuddin Choudhury,* then a prominent member of uncle's group, came to see uncle on the 12th April at Jealgora to discuss matters in connection with the ensuing meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to be held in Calcutta. The meeting of the All India Congress Committee had been called on the 29th April, 1939, in Calcutta to discuss and resolve the deadlock that had arisen in the matter of formation of the Working Committee Uncle suggested to Mahatma Gandhi that they should meet somewhere near Calcutta a few days ahead of the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in order

*He later on went over to East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh.

to make a last attempt at settlement, if possible. Accordingly, it was arranged that the Mahatma would stay at Sodepur with Mr. Satish Chandra Das Gupta of the 'Khadi Pratisthan'

With the same object in view, uncle wrote on the 15th April to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as follows :

> "Will it be possible for you to run up here for a few hours ?
>
> "If you could spare the time to come, you could save time by coming by Toofan Express (8 Down) which reaches Dhanbad at 4-30 P M and you cauld leave by the Bombay Mail which reaches Dhanbad at midnight Jamadoba is 9 miles from Dhanbad The car will meet you at the Station

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru acceded to uncle's request and arrived at Jamadoba in the afternoon on the 19th April. He left for Allahabad by the midnight train I remember a small incident at the Dhanbad station where I went to see Pandit Nehru off. Dhanbad being a wayside station, no reservation of berths could be made from there and one had to take his or her chance in the matter of accommodation I suggested to Pandit Nehru to get into a first class compartment which in those days used to run fairly empty during off-seasons He said, however, that he had given up travelling in first class on the railways long ago and normally travelled either in third or, failing that, in second* class I had had the opportunity of receiving and seeing off Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru a number of times at the railway stations and found him generally travelling in the second class. He had come to Dhanbad in a second class compartment and proposed to travel on the return journey in the same class When the train arrived at Dhanbad, we found the train packed

*This refers to the classification which was then in vogue in the Indian Railways

to capacity and there was only one upper berth in the second class, which was unoccupied. I requested the guard of the train to join me in requesting by turn one of the two passengers occupying the lower berths to vacate his berth for Pandit Nehru, and he readily agreed. The guard and myself thereupon tried to persuade either of the occupants of the two lower berths to move up to the upper berth and make room for Pandit Nehru in the lower berth None of the passengers, who were both Indians, would however agree to oblige, and Pandit Nehru had therefore to travel overnight on the upper berth. Little did those passengers know that the person for whom the request was made would in less than ten years be the Prime Minister of India It was not improbable that the passengers concerned were employees of the Government of India and were still in the employment of the Government at the time Pandit Nehru became the head of that Government. Uncle left Jamadoba for Calcutta on the 21st April, 1939, after a stay there lasting for five weeks. He had almost fully recovered from the effects of the illness thanks to the rest and devoted care of my uncle and aunt and wonderful nursing by my cousin-sister, Ila, who was ably assisted by her sister, Sheila

I obtained leave for a few days and came down to Calcutta on the 29th April with the principal object of witnessing the proceedings of the momentous meeting of the A.I C C. On reaching home, I found that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had arrived on the 27th and been putting up with us As already arranged, Mahatma Gandhi had been staying at Sodepur, and uncle and Pandit Nehru had been engaged in prolonged discussions with the former with a view to finding out a basis for a compromise

The All-India Congress Committee commenced its sitting on the 29th April, 1939, at 5 P.M. at the Wellington Square. A tastefully decorated pandal had been erected for the meeting At the outset, uncle announced his resignation of the

office of the President consequent on breakdown in negotiations for a compromise. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thereupon brought forward a resolution seeking to renominate en bloc the Working Committee that had functioned during the previous year and requesting the President to withdraw his resignation on the understanding that two of the members viz., the late Jamuna Lal Bajaj and the late Jairamdas Daulatram would very soon retire from the Committee thus affording the President the opportunity of nominating two members of his choice on the Committee. Long and bitter discussion followed Pandit Nehru's speech. The resolution was a clever device to trap uncle, but he steered clear of it and conducted himself throughout the proceedings with great dignity. On the day following, the Committee accepted the resignation of uncle and elected Babu Rajendra Prasad the President for the remaining period. The personnel of the new Working Committee was announced by the new President on the 1st May The names of uncle, father, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were dropped from the list of new members. Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh were taken in as members in place of uncle and father respectively. One seat was purposely kept vacant for eventual nomination of Pandit Nehru.

A most inspiring telegraphic message was received by uncle from Poet Tagore after his resignation from the Presidentship of the Congress in the following terms :

> "THE DIGNITY AND FORBEARANCE WHICH YOU HAVE SHOWN IN THE MIDST OF A MOST AGGRAVATING SITUATION HAS WON MY ADMIRATION AND CONFIDENCE IN YOUR LEADERSHIP. THE SAME PERFECT DECORUM HAS STILL TO BE MAINTAINED BY BENGAL FOR THE SAKE OF HER OWN SELF-RESPECT AND THEREBY HELP TO TURN YOUR APPARENT DEFEAT INTO A PERMANENT VICTORY."

The view expressed by the Poet in his message to uncle after the session of the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta was reiterated by him in a letter which he wrote to Dr. Amiya Chakravarty from Mongpu in the Darjeeling Hills on the 20th May, 1939 Dr. Chakravarty had previously been the Poet's Private Secretary and was then closely associated with him in the Visva-Bharati. In the concluding paragraph of his long letter dealing with the Congress, the Poet observed :

> "I know that the supreme political leadership of Bengal is now vested in Subhas Chandra. I have already said that I have no place in the All-India politics in which he has been striving to establish himself Through the dust raised by storm of party warfare, I am unable to see the future clearly—nor have I the capacity to do so In the midst of this din and bustle I am thinking of Bengal. The Bengal which we will make great, will be the Bengal which will be an acquisition to the whole of India I hail Subhas in the hope that with his steadfast determination he will succeed in the task of removing the poverty of her body and soul I assure him in his endeavours such special help from me as I am capable of placing at his disposal Bengal will then come to occupy an honoured place in the Indian Congress. May Subhas Chandra's endeavours ('Tapasaya') bring about the fulfilment of that aspiration."

I learned about this letter from Dr. Chakravarty whom I knew well from my student days in Europe during the period from 1933 to 1936, particularly during 1935-36, when he was a research scholar in Oxford. As stated before, he presided over the annual conference of the Federation of Indian Students Abroad in Berlin in the year 1935 and was also present at the conference in the following year in Prague at both of which the writer was present and called upon to play some part.

Immediately after resigning the presidentship, uncle

founded a new party within the Congress, which was named Forward Bloc, comprising the genuine radical and leftist elements. Thereupon, he undertook a whirlwind tour of the whole country to rally support behind the party. In spite of the defection of a number of his erstwhile supporters—some old ex-revolutionaries of the so-called 'Jugantar' group, and persons like Dr B. C. Roy, Mr Kiron Sankar Roy, and others, who were wedded to parliamentary politics and as a rule fought shy of mass contact as well as sacrifice and suffering, Congressmen as a whole in Bengal stood solidly behind uncle and thus the Forward Bloc had the best start possible in that province. The Bloc very soon assumed an all-India character with prominent leaders of other provinces joining the party. Among the prominent leaders of the Bloc outside Bengal were Sardar Sardul Singh Kaveesher of Punjab, Lala Shankar Lal of Delhi, Mr. K. F. Nariman of Bombay, Mr. Senapati Bapat of Maharashtra, Mian Akbar Shah of North-West Frontier Province, Mr. S. K. Hosmani of Karnatak, Mr. R. S. Ruikar of Central Provinces and last but not the least, Mr. H. V. Kamath, who had resigned from the Indian Civil Service a few years ago and joined the Congress, and many others.

Early in June, 1939, I was provided with a bungalow of my own near my place of work, Bararee Coke Works, and I moved in there from Jamadoba The bungalow at Bararee where I lived for about nine years thereafter will remain for ever enshrined in my memory for an event which took place there early in the year 1941, to which I shall have occasion to refer hereafter.

In June, 1939, the All-India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay. The Conference was attended by delegates from all provinces. The constitution and the programme were laid down at that Conference. In August, 1939, the weekly organ of the party was started in Calcutta under the editorship of uncle himself and the first issue of

the journal came out on the 5th August, 1939, with the leading article under the caption, "Why Forward Bloc?", written by uncle. In summing up the reason for the formation of the party and its role, uncle observed, "The Forward Bloc is, therefore, not only the creature of an inner urge within the Congress, but it is also the product of historical necessity. Moreover, the circumstances of the present day warrant its emergence." The Gandhi Wing who were then in complete control of Congress machinery, while unable to raise their little finger against the British Government, were, however, stirred to action on the home front and expelled uncle from the Congress for three years.

On the disciplinary action taken against him, uncle issued a long statement to the press, which was published in the newspapers throughout the country on the 13th August, 1939. He observed, "By trying to warn the country about the continued drift towards constitutionalism and reformism, by protesting against resolutions which seek to kill the revolutionary spirit of the Congress, by working for the cause of left consolidation and last but not least by constantly appealing to the country to prepare for the coming struggle—I have committed a crime for which I have to pay the penalty." He foresaw and even predicted that a world war would break out in autumn 1939, which was but a few weeks' away and that this would afford India a golden opportunity to achieve her independence. Unlike other leaders of the Congress, uncle did not have any objection on principle to, or suffer from any complex born of cowardice about, taking advantage of the enemy's difficulties when the objective was winning freedom.

Towards the end of June, 1939, my second younger brother, Amiya, who was then a student in Cambridge came to India during the long summer vacation. He was one of those few who were in uncle's confidence and who used to maintain contacts on the latter's behalf, with parties and

individuals in Britain and Europe. He brought to uncle news from first-hand sources in Germany that war between Germany and England was imminent. Uncle wanted to go out of India when war broke out to contact friendly powers and secure assistance in organizing an armed revolution in India. In order to draw up his plan of escape, uncle, however, considered it essential to know beforehand to what extent the British authorities were informed about his movements and activities and also the sources of their intelligence about him He thereupon decided to get hold by any means and at whatever cost, his dossier maintained by the Intelligence department of the Special Branch of the Police in Calcutta.

Mr. Satya Ranjan Bakshi succeeded in making arrangements for the voluminous police dossier on uncle to be brought over to him for seven days consecutively. This used to be brought over towards midnight and returned to its place before dawn. After everyone had gone to bed, uncle used to go through the same along with Amiya. The dossier served, among others, to give him a true picture of the role and activities of various persons—political co-workers, alleged friends and others, and even some of his own relatives. During one of my short visits to Calcutta at the time, I was given the opportunity by uncle to have a rapid glance at few pages of the dossier I know uncle was most disagreeably surprised to learn therefrom about the dubious role of some of his socalled co-workers and was also forewarned from a perusal of the dossier about the surveillance of his movements by one of his own cousins. This also proved of incalculable help to him in steering clear of actual and potential enemies while drawing up his plan of escape from India a year later.

Shortly thereafter, uncle renewed his contacts with Germany and Italy and at the same time opened negotiations with the Soviet Union through the Communist Party of India.

It was finally decided by him to send a direct communication to Moscow through Amiya who had booked his return passage to Europe by an Italian steamer. Immediately after Amiya arrived in Bombay prior to sailing for Europe, he was sent for by the Police and told clearly that he would not be permitted to travel by an Italian boat (though at the time Italy had not joined the war against Britain) but that he must travel by a British plane. He submitted to this after consultation with uncle who was then in Bombay and carried the latter's message to be handed over to the contact man of the Soviet Union in England.

On the 19th August, uncle invited the Poet to lay the foundation stone of the edifice, *Mahajati Sadan* (House of the Nation) in Calcutta. Uncle conceived of the idea in Europe during 1933-36 taking Pantheon of Paris, Hall of Martyrs in Rome, and Hall of the Soviet in Moscow as models but without imitating any of them blindly. He envisaged the House of the Nation to be a harmonious blend of the art of all the above-mentioned edifices and others in Europe but bearing the distinctive stamp of India's genius and culture.

In requesting the Poet to lay the foundation stone of *Mahajati Sadan*—the "House of the Nation," uncle said :

> "Gurudev, we welcome you as the high priest in today's national festival, proceed to lay with your hands the foundation stone of *Mahajati Sadan* Give your blessings, so that we may be able to make this the 'House of the Nation' the living centre of all those beneficent activities which will bring emancipation of the individual and of the nation, as well as the all-round development of India's manhood and nationhood Bless us that we may hasten along the path that will lead to India's liberty and to our national self-fulfilment "

The Poet's illuminating address on the occasion contained the following passage :

"Today in this great Hall of India we shall lay the foundation of Bengal's prowess but our strength will not lie in arrogant nationalism, suspicious of friends and foes. We shall invoke Bengal's magnanimous heart of hospitality in which our humanity has liberation ; we shall seek freedom in many-sided cooperation."

About the same time, the Poet sent the following message to uncle asking him to take up the leadership of the country :

"Subhas Chandra, I have watched the dawn that witnessed the beginning of your political *Sadhana*. In, that uncertain twilight there had been misgivings in my heart, and I had hesitated to accept you for what you are now Now and again I have felt hurt by stray signs of weakness and irresolute hesitancy. Today you are revealed in the pure light of midday sun which does not admit of apprehensions You have come to absorb varied experience during these years. Today you bring your matured mind and irrepressible vitality to bear upon the work at hand. Your strength has sorely been taxed by imprisonment, banishment and disease, rather than impairing, these have helped to broaden your sympathies, enlarging your vision so as to embrace the vast perspective of history beyond any narrow limits of territory. You did not regard apparent defeat as final ; therefore you have turned your trials into your allies More than anything else, Bengal needs today to emulate the powerful force of your determination and your self-reliant courage.

"As I feel that you have come with an errand to usher a new light of hope in our motherland, I ask you to take up the task of the leader of Bengal and ask my countrymen to make it true.

"Long ago at a meeting I addressed my message to the leader of Bengal who was yet to seek. After a lapse of many years I am addressing at this meeting one who has come into the full light of recognition. My days have come to their end I may not join him in the fight that is

> to come. I can only bless him and take my leave, knowing that he has made his country's burden of sorrow his own, that his final reward is fast coming as his country's freedom "

The propaganda offensive of the Forward Bloc was in full swing and the weekly journal, *Forward Bloc* had been coming out regularly containing at least one signed article by uncle every week, when news burst on the world on the 3rd September, 1939, that Britain and France were at war with Germany. On the very day Britain declared war on Germany, the Viceroy declared India a belligerent and assumed the most stringent powers by means of an ordinance for the suppression of internal disorder. Shortly thereafter, Mahatma Gandhi after his meeting with the Viceroy, issued an amazing statement to the press to the effect that notwithstanding the differences between India and Britain on the question of Indian independence, India should co-operate with Britain in her hour of danger. Even more strange than the Mahatma's attitude was that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Far from taking the lead in guiding the Congress towards non-cooperation with the Government in accordance with the anti-war resolutions adopted by the Congress from year to year since 1927, he used all his influence in order to prevent the Congress from embarrassing the British Government while the war was on.

The Congress Working Committee met on the 8th September, 1939, at Wardah in the Central Provinces to decide what attitude the Congress should take up towards the war. Uncle who had been expelled from the Congress only about a month ago was, nevertheless, specially invited to the meeting and he gave expression to the view of the Forward Bloc that the fight for independence should begin at once. He did not mince matters and added that in case the Congress did not take the necessary steps, "the Forward Bloc would

consider itself free to act as it thought fit in the best interest of the country.

The uncompromising attitude of uncle compelled the Gandhi Wing to give up the idea of co-operation with the Government, but it was only at the end of October, 1939, that the Congress Working Committee ordered the Congress Ministries in eight provinces to lay down office so that they might not be obliged to co-operate in the war-effort But still there was no sign of positive action on the part of the Congress except the passing of long resolutions.

The Forward Bloc went on carrying on continuous propaganda against co-operation with the British Government in the war and in favour of launching a national struggle for complete sovereign independence. The year 1939 came to a close with the Government of India continuing the war-effort on the one hand and fully armed on the other, with emergency powers to deal with any movement that may be launched by the Congress or any other body against the war, and the Congress Working Committee still vacillating and afraid to give a clear lead to the country, and only the Leftists spearheaded by Forward Bloc making preparations for commencing the fight for independence.

In January, 1940, I was posted by my employers in Calcutta temporarily for about three months. This gave me the opportunity of meeting uncle regularly whenever he used to be in Calcutta in between his tours. As usual, he was in the midst of ceaseless activities organizing and consolidating the Forward Bloc, touring the whole country in that behalf, addressing mammoth meetings, and on top of everything contributing signed articles every week to the weekly organ of the party, *Forward Bloc*. In spite of all this, he did not succeed in shaking the Congress Working Committee out of its inertia The continuous propaganda

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**Indian Struggle*, 1935-42, Page 30, by Subhas Chandra Bose.

against co-operation with the British in their war and in favour of commencing the national struggle for independence, however, effectively barred the way to constitutionalism and compromise on which the Congress High Command, under the Mahatma's leadership and inspiration of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, had set their heart In March, 1940, a mammoth All-India Anti-Compromise Conference was convened by the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha at Ramgarh (in Bihar) where the annual session of the Congress was held at the same time From all accounts received in Calcutta, the Anti-Compromise Conference was a greater success than the Congress session

As expected, the Congress did not decide anything positive at Ramgarh and gave no proper lead to the country. The Anti-Compromise Conference, on the other hand, led by uncle and Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, decided to launch a struggle over the issue of the war and of India's demand for independence. The time for commencement of the struggle was set for the National Week in April (6 to 13). In Calcutta, the campaign of civil disobedience was initiated by holding a mammoth meeting at Shraddhananda Park The principal speaker at the meeting was uncle, but there were a few others belonging to other parties, and one or two others from the Forward Bloc. I remember the late Bankim Mukherjee of the Communist Party delivered an impassioned speech at the same meeting, characterizing the leaders of the Congress, and specially those in Bengal like Dr. B. C. Roy and others, as "women in the harem who do not venture out while the sun shines on the horizon". When the campaign had actually started, Mr. Bankim Mukherjee was, however, not to be found, and the Communist Party also withdrew from the scene to reemerge later in an altogether different, nay, mischievous, role. Another speaker who drew tremendous applause from the audience was Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakravarti, a member

of the Forward Bloc, who had just started coming into prominence in Congress and Forward Bloc circles. He was an accomplished orator in the Bengali language.

Prominent members of the Bloc were put into prison one by one as soon as the campaign was started. Messrs. Annapurniah in Andhra, Senapati Bapat and H. V. Kamath in Bombay, Kisan leader Bhuskuta in Maharashtra, Professor Ranga in Madras, Ashrafuddin Choudhury, Secretary of the Bengal Congress (the real body under uncle's leadership in contradistinction to the rump 'adhoc' body set up by the Congress Working Committee), and Satya Ranjan Bakshi, Secretary of the Bengal Forward Bloc, and a host of others—belonging mostly to Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha—were clapped behind bars. But somehow the campaign did not gain the desired momentum and soon showed signs of flagging. This compelled uncle to think about and devise a new strategy with a view to giving a fresh spurt to the movement. This was provided by the special session of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca on the 25th and 26th May, 1940.

The Conference in the words of uncle*, "urged the people to cast off and demolish all emblems of political servitude which militated against the newly awakened consciousness of Free India. The Holwell Monument in Calcutta which advertises the slavery of the Bengalis in the very heart of the city must now go. So also must disappear another symbol of our subjection viz., political prisoners in jail and in restraint." The Dacca Conference struck another note of warning to the Indian people. Again, in the words of uncle, "the direction of the Provincial Conference was 'Struggle' and 'Unite'—struggle against alien Imperialism and unite among yourselves—if you want to win freedom and preserve it. All

*Signed article of uncle in *Forward Bloc* dated June 1, 1940.

this great and noble endeavour has to be made under the rallying-cry of 'All Power to the Indian people' "

It has already been stated that uncle renewed his contacts with Germany and Italy in the year 1939 and also opened negotiations with the Soviet Union. Negotiations with Japan were initiated about the same time or even a little earlier. Dr. Asit Mukherjee who was then working in the Consulate General of Japan in Calcutta took a leading part in arranging for necessary pourparlers between uncle and Japanese statesmen. These used to be held by pre-arrangements at such places as were not likely to be watched by the Police, mostly at the residences of friends who were not under suspicion of the Intelligence Branch—the houses in Elgin Road and Woodburn Park being quite out of the question for such secret rendezvous. One of my cousins, Dhirendra Nath, alias Ganesh (now deceased), who was engaged on business in textiles, was often chosen by Dr. Mukherjee to convey important messages to uncle in this behalf. Dr. Mukherjee who used to come occasionally to 38/2, Elgin Road, usually brought along his wife, Sabitri Devi, who was Greek by nationality and had embraced Hinduism. She was permitted access upstairs to the ladies of the household and acted as her husband's messenger while the latter waited downstairs. As a result of the above discussions, uncle felt the urgency of deputing a trusted emissary to Japan for further direct negotiations.

As a result, about the middle of the year 1940, uncle managed to depute one of his trusted lieutenants, Lala Shankarlal of Delhi, then General Secretary, All-India Forward Bloc, as his emissary to Japan to establish direct contact with the rulers of that country and ascertain the latters' attitude at first hand He travelled to Japan on a passport which did not reveal his true identity. The entire episode was engineered so skilfully that although the passport was impounded on Lala Shankarlal's return from Japan, the British Government were

not able to successfully prosecute him for travelling with a faked passport. One of my cousins, Dwijendra Nath, was entrusted by uncle to see through the necessary arrangements for Lala Shankarlal's secret trip to Japan. Another cousin of mine, Aurobindo, was assigned other tasks of similar nature, secret and confidential.

The second session of the All India Conference of Forward Bloc which met at Nagpur on the 18th June, 1940, not only ratified the policy adopted at Dacca, but decided to intensify and widen the scope of the national struggle, well knowing that it had to contend, "with a leadership that is seized with mental and moral paralysis and is determined not to embarrass British Imperialism."[1]

On his way back to Calcutta from Nagpur, uncle broke journey at Wardah to have "his last long talk with Mahatma Gandhi and his principal lieutenants." Uncle made a passionate appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to come forward and launch his campaign of civil disobedience. "The Mahatma," according to uncle, "was still non-committal and he repeated that, in his view, the country was not prepared for a fight and any attempt to precipitate it, would do more harm than good to India"[2] However, at the end of a long and hearty talk, "the Mahatma remarked, that if his [uncle's] efforts to win freedom for India succeeded—then his [the Mahatma's] telegram of congratulation would be the first that the writer (uncle) would receive"[3]

About the same time, uncle had had long discussions with the late M A. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, and the late V. D Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha. They both appeared to be oblivious of the international situation and were thinking how best to secure

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[1]Signed article of uncle in *Forward Bloc* dated June 15, 1940
[2]*The Indian Struggle,* 1935-42, by Subhas Chandra Bose, p, 33-34.
[3]*Ibid,* p. 35.

advantages for their own community—the one about realising his plan of Pakistan and the other about securing military training by enlisting in Britain's army in India. The Forward Bloc, therefore, decided to go forward alone for the time being, and the 3rd July, 1940, was fixed for commencing the movement for demolition of the Holwell monument in Calcutta. On the 2nd July, 1940, uncle was arrested under the Defence of India Rules and taken to the Presidency Jail in Calcutta. Even after uncle's incarceration, the campaign continued with so much vigour as to stir the rank and file of the Gandhi Wing. Ultimately, the Mahatma's hands were forced and he decided to offer resistance to British Government's war efforts—not on a mass scale but in the form of what was termed as "Individual Satyagraha".

As a result of the passive resistance offered on a mass scale by Hindus and Muslims alike in Bengal under the leadership of the Forward Bloc, the Government yielded to the popular demand and agreed to the demolition of the Holwell monument This was followed by release of all who had been arrested in connection with that movement except uncle who continued to be held in detention without trial.

In this connection, I cannot resist the temptation to refer to a very interesting episode. In the months of May and June, 1940, during the brief periods of his stay in Calcutta between tours, uncle used to invite well-known astrologers and palmists from all places in India and remain closeted with them by turn for quite some time. This was, indeed, an amazing spectacle, as amongst his brothers, uncle alone had been known to be a non-believer in astrology or palmistry. Nor had he ever been seen to consult astrologers or palmists, much less set any store by their so-called predictions. The whole thing assumed a more intriguing aspect as uncle would not breathe a word about his discussions with the astrologers and palmists to anyone in the family.

Ultimately, sometime in June, 1940, shortly before his

last incarceration in India, my mother asked uncle what it was all about. From what I gathered from her subsequently was that uncle's reply had been very pithy and all that he would say was that none of the astrologers or palmists he had consulted could give even a hint of the line of his thinking at the time and of his future activities Uncle did not elaborate further on what he had told mother, and naturally mother did not, on her part, seek any more clarification on the subject Uncle, had, however, implied that from his recent contact with astrologers and palmists, he had found nothing to revise his opinion on the value of predictions made by them I was told by mother as to what had passed between uncle and herself on the subject, only in December 1940 in the context of the momentous developments destined to take place very shortly thereafter, but about this more in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

1940-1941 and After
The Final Phase of Struggle in India

Having finally succeeded in forcing Mahatma Gandhi's hands and in committing the Gandhi Wing and thus the Congress to take up an anti-British and anti-war policy, uncle thought, "it was time to consider bigger plans for achieving the independence of India."* When I saw him for a few minutes in June, 1940, after his return from his visit to the Mahatma, I did not fail to notice in him a feeling of restlessness verging almost on despair Britain was in dire straits and yet we in India were not, he observed, availing ourselves of the golden opportunity and playing our part The idea that he may soon be put in prison and condemmed to inactivity was galling to him. I had, of course, no inkling of what he had been thinking or of the plans he had been drawing up. I was able to ascertain much later that nobody except two or three persons like father or Mr. Satya Ranjan Bakshi had any knowledge thereof All I knew was that during the last two years, uncle had been trying to renew his contacts with the powers that were fighting or were to fight Britain in the very near future.

**Indian Struggle, 1935-42* Pp. 56-57.

These contacts were established through the Consulates of the countries concerned viz , Germany, Italy and Japan—efforts to contact the Soviet Union not having proved wholly successful—and had to be made under the greatest secrecy at meetings held at the residences of trusted friends arranged through the intermediary of a few reliable couriers as already referred to in the last chapter I had heard from uncle himself that owing to tactlessness on the part of two of his couriers, the Police were able to shadow their movements, and as a result thereof, intensified their watch on uncle, his co-workers, members of his family, and, in fact, all those who stood close to him It has already been mentioned that uncle was taken into custody on the 2nd July, 1940, under the Defence of India Rules on the eve of the movement for the demolition of the Holwell monument sited at the centre of the city When ultimately the Government yielded to the popular demand, all except uncle and Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakravarty were released from prison The Government, no doubt, thought it would be too risky to release uncle. Mr Chakravarty was presumably kept in prison, not for the sake of providing a companion for uncle but on the apprehension that he may act as uncle's 'contact man' when he went out. Mr Chakravarty, who was set at liberty shortly after uncle's release, told me later that uncle had indeed given him a number of assignments in Delhi and northern India including a secret trip to Europe and to contact Soviet Union and the Axis powers as his emissary.

In his *Indian Struggle, 1935-42*, uncle explained clearly his line of thinking and the action he took in pursuance thereof during the period. He wrote, "India would win her independence if she played her part in the war against Britain and collaborated with those powers that were fighting Britain " The conclusion uncle drew for himself was that "India should actively enter the field of international politics." Uncle continued that he had already been in British

custody eleven times, but now he felt that "it would be a gross political blunder to remain inactive in prison, when history was being made elsewhere."* He then explored the possibility of being released in a legal manner, but found that there was none, because the British Government was determined to keep him locked up, so long as the war lasted" Thereupon, uncle "sent an ultimatum to the Government pointing out that there was no moral or legal justification for detaining him in jail and that if he was not released forthwith, he would fast unto death."** Uncle said that "he was determined to get out of prison, whether dead or alive"

The ultimatum, which uncle characterized as his last will and testament, should have, as per his request, been and was, indeed, preserved in the the archives of the Government. This and other letters addressed by uncle to the Government have since been published.

The Government at first laughed at the ultimatum and did not give any reply and then took up a very hostile attitude. The fast began on the 29th November, 1940, as already announced. After about a week, uncle's health deteriorated so fast that the Government got frightened lest he should die in prison. It was, therefore, decided to release him unconditionally at that time with the intention of re-arresting him after several weeks when his health should improve somewhat. Two criminal cases—one for seditious writing in *Forward Bloc* and another for a speech delivered in Calcutta sometime ago had previously been instituted against him in the criminal courts and these were pending at the time of his release. As uncle was too ill to appear in court, release on bail was secured against medical certificate. Uncle was brought home on the 5th December, 1940, in the afternoon after his release.

**Indian Struggle, 1935-42*, p 36-37.

***Ibid*

On the 19th December, I received my mother's letter, informing me that she was likely to pay a visit to my place at Bararce during the last week of the month and spend about a week there, and asking me to come down to Calcutta to talk over certain urgent family matters. Accordingly, I arrived in Calcutta on the 21st December. Mother then asked me to go and see uncle the same evening as he had something very important to talk to me adding that it was at uncle's desire that I had been sent for. I thereupon went to see uncle at 38/2, Elgin Road the same evening.

As he had been released unconditionally from prison and also granted bail in the sedition cases pending against him, there was no reason for the Police to be present in force around the premises, and yet I found that almost an entire regiment of them had been detailed to keep close watch on the house. About eight or ten watchers, the majority of them in uniform and the rest in plain clothes, were posted near the junction of Elgin Road and Woodburn Road to the east of the house An equal number was posted a little distance away on the Elgin Road to the west of the house. Other batches were posted due north of the house on the opposite footpath and to the south and on other approach roads I could reckon at least twenty-five policemen in uniform on duty at any one time during my four days' stay in Calcutta from the 21st to the 24th December. The benign Government provided them with benches to sit on and as it was the coldest season of the year, also with proper winter clothing Moreover, there must have been a large number of watchers in plain clothes in and around the premises. It was clear that such a large force of police had been deployed to keep track of every person who happened to visit the house The vigil was round the clock

A high police officer (now retired) was recently reported to have stated that the then Home Minister, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, had issued instructions that no watchers need

be posted around uncle's house. Whether Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin did in fact issue any such instructions, it is not possible to check up now, and in any case, it was immaterial as the regiment of watchers continued to be posted till the 26th January, 1941, that is, even after uncle had left home, in the belief that uncle was still in the premises. One other thing the same police officer omitted to mention—possibly deliberately—was that the Police in Bengal at least did not in those days, that is, after the declaration of war, take orders from the Ministers of the Provincial Government, but from the Home Department of the Government of India, and the Governor. This was painfully evident to us—in fact, it was driven home to us in the clearest possible manner—when father was arrested under the Defence of India Rules several months later, that is, in December, 1941, and was transferred to far south without even the knowledge of, much less under instructions from, the then Home Minsister of Bengal, the late Maulavi Fazlul Haque. Not to speak of us who were present at the station, the police refused to allow even Maulavi Fazlul Haque and another Minister, Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, who were present at the platform of the Howrah station on receipt of information that father was being taken away, to talk to father or even exchange greetings with him.

When it was nearing midnight and everybody had gone to bed including my cousin-sister, Ila, who had since 1938 been uncle's indefatigable nurse, uncle enquired of me whether I had of late noticed my movements being watched by the Police in and around my place of work in Bihar. My role during my under-graduate days in India in the student movement, specially my membership of the inner councils of the Bengal Provincial Students' Association, with its links with the revolutionary movement, and subsequently in that of the Federation of Indian Students' Abroad in Europe and above all my close association with uncle until the beginning

of 1938, had made the Police keep their eyes on me. However, after I left Calcutta, towards the middle of that year to tàke up employment, the Police gradually withdrew their attention on me, and by 1940, I could feel that I was no longer being shadowed by them. I told uncle accordingly. Thereupon, he asked me whether I would be able to drive a car for a distance of 200 to 250 miles at a stretch (with very brief halts) without fatigue. On my replying in the affirmative, he advised me to keep my car in tip-top condition as it may be necessary to use it in connection with a very important journey about which he would, he added, speak to me later. He then asked me to see him again the next evening for more detailed talk. I noticed then that uncle had grown a beard.

A reference may be made here to a matter which may appear somewhat trivial. Uncle used to have a mole just below his left ear This was of blackish-gray colour of a quarter of an inch in diameter and was the most prominent visible distinguishing mark on his face, and, naturally, was mentioned as such on his first as well as on his second passport issued by the British Government in India. Even in the midst of his hectic political life, he quietly arranged for the necessary surgical operation (possibly a minor one) to have the mole removed. By the end of 1939, the faintest scar thereof had disappeared, thus obliterating the mole as a sign of personal identification It may be presumed that uncle resorted to this with an eye to his future plans of escape from the clutches of the British This would serve as another example of his meticulous attention to every detail The beard had not only masked the spot of the scar completely, but altered his facial appearance

On the following evening when I went to see uncle, I was asked to wait till everybody left the room. Uncle then told me that he would very soon undertake a secret journey to north-west India and that he proposed to cover part of

the distance by road. He added that he had been thinking of making a short halt somewhere near Dhanbad. After long discussions, and weighing all the pros and cons, he decided to stop at my bungalow at Bararee. Regarding the date of his arrival at Bararee, he said he could not be more definite just then, but asked me to be prepared to receive him there any day after the middle of January, 1941, and to ensure that not a single guest, whether near or distant relations or friends, were in my bungalow at the time. Before I parted from uncle in Calcutta, I was sworn to complete secrecy—not to breathe a word about what I had been told to anybody, even to my wife, with the exception of my mother He asked me, further, either to discharge or send home on long leave any of my servants who might have seen uncle before either in Calcutta or anywhere else.

Other preparations, too, for the journey were under way at that time including getting new dresses made of heavy woollen material tailored in the style worn by Pathans in the North West Frontier Province and a 'fez' (headgear). These had been entrusted to my third younger brother, Sisir. I returned to the coalfields on the 25th December As already arranged, mother came and spent about ten days with us in Bararee in the last week of December and the first week, of January, 1941 Sisir remained in Calcutta in order to give the finishing touches to the preparations for the perilous journey which uncle had decided to undertake shortly He paid a flying visit to Bararee early in January to escort mother and party on their return journey to Calcutta by road to familiarize himself fully with the topography of the region and more particularly with the neighbourhood of my bungalow. Uncle's own words are worth quoting in this connection. He wrote . "After his release, the writer was at home for about forty days and did not leave his bedroom During this period, he surveyed the whole war situation and came to the conclusion that Indian freedom-fighters should have

first-hand information as to what was happening abroad and should join the fight against Britain and thereby contribute to the break-up of the British Empire. After considering the different means whereby this could be done, he found no other alternative but to travel abroad himself."*

From his house after his release from prison, uncle wrote at about the same time to Mahatma Gandhi. In the first letter which was dated the 23rd December, 1940, he wrote : "When Mahadevbhai[1] saw me in Presidency Jail, I took the opportunity of conveying a message to you. I requested him to tell you that if you launched a movement, then our services would be entirely at your disposal for what they were worth. . . . At the time, my fond expectation was that you would launch a mass movement, as you had done in 1921, 1930 and 1932—though Mahadevbhai told me that you had been thinking of individual Civil Disobedience Today it is clear that the movement launched by you is not on the issue of our national demand for Independence. Nor is this movement a mass struggle If the Government were to permit anti-war speeches, it appears to me that the movement would come to an end Nevertheless, we would like to co-operate with such a movement, despite its restricted scope and form, so far as it lies in our power, consistently with our political stand We would like to know if you would accept our co-operation for what it is worth—and if so, what you would like us to do in pursuance of this offer of co-operation This proffered co-operation is unconditional in the sense that whatever grievances we may have against the Congress High Command will not stand in our way. . . . . In all sincerity I am offering you our co-operation" To this the Mahatma replied on

*_Indian Struggle, 1935-1942_, Pp 37

[1]The late Mahadev Desai, then Principal Private Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi

the 29th December, 1940, "You are irrepressible whether ill or well Do get well before going in for fireworks. . . . As for your Bloc joining C.D , I think with the fundamental differences between you and me, it is not possible till one of us is converted to the other's view, we must sail in different boats, though their destination may appear, but only appear to be the same."

In reply to Mahatma Gandhi's letter of the 29th December, 1940, uncle wrote to the former again on the 10th January, 1941 : "As you are aware that in the previous struggle, many worked shoulder to shoulder with ardent Gandhites while differing from them on several important questions. Why should not this happen again ? I beg you to reconsider your decision . You have said—'Till one of us is converted to the other's view, we must sail in different boats, though their destination may appear, but only appear to be the same'. Does this mean that in your view our political goals are different ? How could that be ? Kindly tell me what exactly you mean " Uncle's letter of the 10th January remained unanswered till the 16th February, 1941, for the reason that the Mahatma had not received the former's letter before February, 1941

Meanwhile, preparations for uncle's journey were being finalized The problem was not merely to evade the attention of the swarms of uniformed and plain-clothes policemen keeping watch all around his residence, round the clock, but of numerous members of the family and inmates of the house. A proposal for uncle to shift to 1, Woodburn Park and start the journey from there was examined, but was ultimately discarded as such a move would dispel the impression so assiduously built up for weeks that uncle was dangerously ill. Moreover, this was sure to alert the Police to intensify their watch and to result in the spotlight being focussed on father and his family. Uncle was very very particular that this should not happen as it was essential for father to

remain out of prison as long as possible and maintain contact with uncle. Moreover, at least one member of father's secretarial staff at the time, was not above suspicion of having had secret links with the Police.

Finally, a tent was set up inside uncle's large bedroom in 38/2, Elgin Road where uncle segregated himself from the family-members including my old grandmother. It was given out that he was engaged in performing certain religious rites which had to be carried out by himself in complete seclusion. All interviews with visitors and even family members were stopped, though he maintained close contact with my father and mother and also with my cousin-sister, Ila, cousin-brothers, Dwijendra and Aurobindo, and my brother, Sisir. Further, Dwijen and Aurobindo who were living in the house (38/2, Elgin Road) were hand-picked for scouting and guard duties. The complete plan of uncle's journey was known to very few persons—to father, Mr Satya Ranjan Bakshi, and perhaps to Mian Akbar Shah, leader of the Forward Bloc in the North Western Frontier Province. The last-named genetleman had visited uncle in Calcutta in December, 1940, and had suggested to uncle to travel to Peshawar in the guise of a Pathan and given the necessary hints as to his garb and make-up. Arrangements for his journey from Peshawar to Kabul had already been taken charge of by Mian Akbar Shah.

Sisir was chosen by uncle to take him by car to some suitable point wherefrom he could board the train without rousing any suspicion. The choice of Sisir for this risky venture was owing to his complete non-involvement in political activities of any kind till then and of his being free therefore from suspicion of the Police at that time. He was, moreover, an efficient driver of automobiles with the required stamina. The point chosen was my place in the Bihar coalfield where it was arranged that uncle would rest for several hours and then take the train from either Asansol or Gomoh,

avoiding the nearest railway station, Dhanbad, where Sisir's face may not have been unfamiliar. Again, though there were two witnesses or possibly three, including my cousin sister, Ila, to Sisir driving off with uncle in disguise, the route of the journey and the immediate destination were not known to them. That the knowledge of uncle's plan would be confined to very few persons was only natural as even a whisper about the same among a wider circle was liable to give the entire game away.

During the recent years a number of publications have come out including accounts published in such magazines as are reputed to cater to the tastes of readers more interested in the activities of artists of the screen than in those of freedom fighters giving fanciful stories about preparations preliminary to uncle's escape from India The so-called "facts" stated therein have been alloyed with so much fiction as to make them wholly absurd, specially the reference contained in one of them to a certain gentleman in Jamshedpur who was supposed to have been an Engineer and a senior officer and who was supposed to have collected and remitted Rs 500/- every other day to uncle's funds. The gentleman referred to was neither an Engineer nor a senior officer in Tata Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. at the time, and it is, indeed, difficult to believe that a person of such humble status and position could commandeer so much funds.

On the 17th January, 1941, at about 7 o'clock in the morning, as my wife and I were preparing to sit down for breakfast, my brother, Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, drove into my bungalow at Bararee near Dhanbad in father's *Wanderer* car. On arrival, he took me aside and told me that he had brought uncle in disguise out of Calcutta. I feigned surprise at the news, though I was expecting uncle. He had, he said, put him down about a mile away from the bungalow so as to avoid rousing any suspicion on the part of the servants in the bungalow that he had had anything to do with the

visitor who was due to arrive in the bungalow shortly. While putting down uncle, Sisir had pointed out to him my bungalow and given him clear directions about the road leading to it. Sisir added that at that moment uncle was on his way to the bungalow on foot and would arrive in a few minutes. As uncle would be coming in within a few minutes, we took quick counsel with each other as to what we should tell my wife, who till then had not had the faintest knowledge of uncle's impending arrival, much less any idea about his plan of the journey. We decided that it would be better to tell my wife who the expected visitor was and to enjoin utmost secrecy and discretion on her part, and we did so.

Uncle had sent word to me in advance through Sisir that we should behave towards him in the bungalow as if he was a visitor, not known to my wife or Sisir, so as to allay any possible suspicion on the part of the servants. After a few minutes, a strange visitor was announced by my servant. The visiting card brought by the servant introduced him as Mohd. Ziauddin, Travelling Inspector, Empire of India Life Assurance Co. Ltd. I asked the servant to request the visitor to be seated in the front verandah where a few chairs were normally kept and to tell him that I would see him in a few minutes. He was dressed as a Pathan nobleman from top to toe. What with his dress, 'fez' (headgear) and beard and crescent-shaped spectacles, the disguise was so perfect that it was next to impossible for anybody, much less my servant and chauffeur who happened to be Muslims hailing from Bihar, to recognize uncle in that Pathan. None of them had, of course, seen uncle before. Then followed our stage-acting which had to be carried on during the whole day

As soon as I came out in the verandah, uncle as Mohd. Ziauddin stood up to introduce himself and said in English that he was on a tour of the coalfields to see Directors and Executives of various concerns with a number of attractive schemes of life insurance, which he would like to explain

in detail. I told him also in English that I was in a hurry to go to work and was unable to spare any time just then. I asked him whether he could call later in the evening. The visitor replied that as he was coming from a far-off place and as there was no suitable place nearby where one could lodge, he would rather wait at my place till my return from work and then catch the train for his return journey *in* the evening. Thereupon, I told him that he was welcome to wait till the evening if he could spare the time and promised to hear about his schemes after my return from work. I then requested him to step into the sitting room and asked my servant to serve him tea there. At this time, Sisir, who had gone inside the bungalow and was not present when the visitor entered the premises, came to the sitting room in a casual manner. I introduced him to the visitor, who, however, showed no particular interest in him as his business was apparently with me.

Before I went out, I told my servant to arrange things in the Guest Room for the visitor to rest there for the day and to serve lunch to him in that room.

I came home for a couple of hours during lunch. As arranged, we three—Sisir, my wife and myself—had our lunch together, and lunch for uncle was served to him in his room. I was told by my wife that my servant showed particular eagerness to serve the visitor, whom he characterised as a Muslim of noble birth, and considered his master to be fortunate in having such a visitor as guest. I did not see the visitor at the lunch time. I learned subsequently that he was able to snatch a few hours' sleep after lunch.

While the servants had gone off for their afternoon rest to their quarters which were at least a furlong away and at the other end of the compound, a quick inventory of uncle's personal effects was made and an additional blanket and a few other items of bedding were provided by us after obliterating all the old identification markings thereon.

On my return from work in the afternoon, I told the visitor that I was then free to talk things over with him. We thereupon sat together in the front verandah and asked the servant to serve tea there for the two of us. Sisir sat in the waiting room with some magazines and my wife kept herself inside, out of sight of the visitor We continued our conversation in English as before so as to allay any suspicion on the part of the servants I told uncle that having carefully considered the matter, I was of the opinion that it would be much safer for him to board the train at Gomoh instead of at Asansol, as he had originally intended. Asansol, being a large junction station and the divisional headquarters of the then East Indian Railway, used to be crowded at all hours of the day and night. Further, a contingent of Government Railway Police was normally present on the station platform On the other hand, Gomoh was a much smaller and quieter station and few passengers boarded the train or alighted from it at that place and, specially at night, the station had almost a deserted look with railway or any other police being normally not in evidence. Uncle was impressed by my argument and dropped the idea of boarding the Delhi-Kalka mail from Asansol and decided to do so from Gomoh instead. I went inside the sitting room and told Sisir of uncle's decision.

It was further decided that I would accompany uncle and Sisir on the journey as Sisir was not quite familiar with the stretch of the road from Bararee to Gomoh. The question then arose as to whether we could take my wife along. I explained to uncle that as there was nobody else living in the bungalow except we two, it was not safe to leave my wife alone in the bungalow at night in charge of servants who were all more or less new in service, and further, that leaving my wife in the house of any friend in the neighbourhod may arouse undue curiosity. Hence, I requested uncle to assent to her coming along with us, of course, on the promise that she would keep her mouth shut. Uncle appreciated

this and consented to my wife joining our party on that condition.

Thereafter, I told my servant to make haste and serve dinner to the visitor in his room as the latter would have to catch his train. At the same time we had our dinner in the dining room somewhat earlier than our usual time on the plea that we would be going out to a party with Sisir.

After dinner, Sisir and I came out to the verandah to bid farewell to the visitor who took leave of us with due ceremony. The greetings at the time of parting were exchanged in English as the servants were present at the time He left the bungalow on foot ostensibly to catch a taxi at the nearest taxi stand which was about a mile away The three of us, Sisir, my wife, and myself then set out after half-an-hour's interval and picked him up on the way. We drove along the Grand Trunk Road towards Gomoh It was a real sentimental journey, the poignancy of which was too deep for words Near about Gomoh, we stopped on the lonely roadside for an hour or so—as the train (Delhi-Kalka Mail) was not due to arrive at Gomoh before midnight—for a quiet homely chat. Uncle told us then that he was bound for Peshawar en route to Kabul and thence to Moscow, and eventually, Berlin. Accordingly, he would, he continued, board the Delhi-Kalka Mail, but would get off at some wayside station before reaching Delhi so as to bypass the capital, and then take the Frontier Mail for Peshawar. If the fact of his escape, he added, could be kept secret for another 8 or 9 days, he hoped he would by then be out of reach of the British Indian Government.

It may be remembered that two cases for sedition had been pending against uncle at the time of his escape from Calcutta and technically he had been released on bail so far as these cases were concerned. The day of next hearing of the first case against uncle had been fixed on the 27th January, 1941. The trying Magistrate, while excusing his

failure to put in personal appearance, had passed orders at the previous hearing that no further extension of leave of absence on account of ill-health would be granted to uncle and that he must be produced in court on that date, that is, the 27th January, 1941. So far as Sisir and myself were concerned, uncle did not worry about the secret being kept fully. About my wife—who had come into our family only about two years ago and also not at all been used to facing such or similar predicaments—he had, however, some misgivings. But a word from uncle enjoining secrecy was enough to elicit the most solemn promise from her to keep the thing absolutely secret—a promise which she kept to the letter, in spite of various inducements to open her mouth and earn approbation.

It was further impressed on her most emphatically that leakage of the smallest bit of information or even the slightest hint from her that she had been privy to anything secret would expose the whole family to dire risk, and this she did bear in mind. Uncle warned us repeatedly that the aftermath of his escape might be extremely grave as the Police might try and continue to try even for more than a decade thereafter to get to the bottom of the whole thing. Thereupon, I ventured to ask him whether there had been any hitch at the time of his departure from 38/2, Elgin Road. He replied that there had indeed been a serious one when one of his nephews who had not been taken into confidence in the matter of his escape appeared to be rather inquisitive on seeing Sisir waiting with the car at the house after midnight.

Sisir used to come with the same car to 38/2, Elgin Road, of course, every evening after 10 P.M. for days on end, but generally he used to leave on other days before midnight. This stratagem of Sisir's visiting 38/2, Elgin Road every evening with the car had been resorted to several days in advance of the actual day of uncle's escape in order to make it appear as a daily routine. This was calculated to put off

not merely the police watchers outside the premises, but the inmates of the house as well Fortunately, however, the nephew concerned went to bed shortly after midnight, the rest of the inmates of the house having retired much earlier Had the former not gone to bed before the scheduled time of uncle's departure, he would have been obliged to defer his journey.

As the time of the arrival of the train at Gomoh drew near, we started for the station, and on arrival there, quickly put him down and drove half-a-mile or so away from the station. We saw uncle go to the ticket counter which was near the entrance to the station building and then walk up to the overbridge towards the platform We saw the train approach the station, come to a stop, and then steam off again. As per uncle's instructions, we waited for another half-an-hour after the departure of the train. Thereafter having satisfied ourselves that he had boarded the train safely, we drove back to the coalfields. This marked the end of direct personal contact with uncle and ourselves, nay the whole family, at least for the time being.

Of late, another fictitious story was, we are told, given out that another person was present at the platform of the Gomoh station in the garb of a Pathan in the early hours of the 18th January, 1941, who purchased the railway ticket for uncle and saw him off on the train This is nothing but pure fabrication as uncle's original plan had been to go to Asansol and not Gomoh to catch the train The choice of Gomoh was made at the last moment, that is on the 17th after uncle's arrival in my bungalow, and except uncle and the three of us, nobody else knew that he would board the train at Gomoh. Again, in one film on uncle which had been the subject of bitter criticism and ultimately a case for defamation in law courts, it was depicted that attempts had been made by the Police to shadow uncle at Gomoh station This too had no basis whatever in fact. Indeed, until the year

1945, the Police had no knowledge at all of the route and manner of uncle's journey to Peshawar. By the time we returned to the bungalow it was past 1 o'clock. Sisir left us after a short rest for Calcutta early in the morning of the 18th December.

In the first chapter of his book, *Indian Struggle, 1935-1942*, uncle wrote : "While passive resistance can hold up or paralyse a foreign administration—it cannot overthrow or expel it, without the use of physical force . . The last stage will come when active resistance will develop into an armed revolution. Then will come the end of British rule in India." It was uncle's historic mission to develop active resistance into an armed revolution, and in pursuit of this mission he undertook a perilous journey which was not only unique for its meticulous planning down to the last detail but more so on account of its manner of execution. There have been instances before of revolutionaries having fled the country, but none of them had been leaders of uncle's eminence. Also, the machinery of the Police had not then attained the efficiency it did in 1940-41.

After bidding farewell to uncle at Gomoh, we had been living in anxious suspense, firstly, about his safety during his journey to Peshawar and halt there, then to Afganistan and finally, his journey from Afganistan to Europe, and secondly, about the case at the Alipore Court, that was due to be heard on the 27th January, 1941. When the case was called on the appointed day, the lawyer appearing for uncle stated, quoting from the news that had appeared in the papers the same morning, that the latter was missing from the house and could not be found in spite of careful search at all possible places, and that, therefore, he could not be produced before the Court. The lawyer added, further, that according to his surmise, uncle had renounced the world. The above announcement in the Court was a veritable bombshell and all the Calcutta papers quickly brought

out extraordinary editions to announce the fact of uncle's disappearance.

The news naturally hit the headlines all over India and elicited amongst countless others the following telegraphic messages to father from Poet Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi :

"DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER SUBHAS'S DISAPPEARANCE CONVEY TO MOTHER MY SYMPATHY. KINDLY KEEP ME INFORMED NEWS.

—*RABINDRANATH*"

"STARTLING NEWS ABOUT SUBHAS PLEASE WIRE TRUTH. ANXIOUS HOPE ALL WELL

—*BAPU*"

The powers that be and the Police were aghast and appeared to have momentarily lost their balance and bearing. However, they rallied quickly and made determined efforts to catch uncle, dead or alive, employing all means in their power to that end. Naturally, the house in Elgin Road became the target for intensive search by the Police and the family members and other inmates residing there were subjected to interrogation by the Police. The Deputy Commissioner of Police—an Englishman of the name of Janvrin, who knew and spoke Bengali well led the team of interrogators They tried at the outset to subject my aged grandmother to interrogation, but she quickly turned the tables on them and started interrogating the police officers, The police officers who descended on 38/2, Elgin Road were seasoned interrogators and no doubt were able to guess correctly after brief exchanges with her that grandmother was not in possession of any information Otherwise, it was doubtful whether those notorious sleuths would have spared her from the usual indignities. All the other family members when interrogated maintained that uncle had possibly re-

nounced the world and embraced the life of a mendicant. The Police did not, of course, for a moment admit the possibility of renunciation, but at the same time they were unable to find any clue whatsoever as to uncle's whereabouts while the circumstances—with his wardrobe and other personal effects having been intact and undisturbed—indicated renunciation.

At the very moment the Police in Calcutta and all over India were racking their brains to find him out, uncle had just crossed the Indian frontier and was trudging along the steep and barren mountains on his way to Kabul accompanied by his guide and companion, Mr. Bhagatram Talwar. Mr. Talwar has already written and published a detailed account of uncle's journey from Peshawar to Kabul on which he had been his guide and fellow-traveller. After seeing uncle safely off on his journey to Europe on the 18th March, 1941, Mr. Talwar returned to Peshawar and then came down to Calcutta in the first week of April, 1941, to meet father and give him all the news of uncle's journey from Peshawar to Kabul and deliver to him uncle's letter written in Bengali and his article entitled, "Forward Bloc—its justification "*

Except for redoubling watch on our house in Calcutta—1, Woodburn Park—the Police did not at the time trouble to interrogate anybody living there. But simultaneously with the announcement of the news of uncle's disappearance, they started the game of kite-flying to test the reaction of those of his relatives who stood close to him.

On the 28th or 29th January, a rumour was circulated under the inspiration of the Police in Calcutta that uncle had been arrested near Jharia in the coalfields while wandering in the garb of a mendicant. Father rang me up at Bararee from Calcutta and told me the above news. He asked me to make enquiries at the police stations in the area and ring

*This was published as an appendix to the *Indian Struggle, 1935-1942.*

him back. The Superintendent of Police of the sub-division at the time was one P. K Mitter who, we were told, was half-English by birth and belonged to a class of Police Officers greatly favoured by the British in those days. No doubt he would have been very glad if the rumour were true, but in spite of his professed loyalty to the British, Mitter was too obtuse to grasp the fact that the entire story had been manufactured in Calcutta However, I went round almost all the police stations in the area and finally informed father over the telephone that there was no basis of truth in the rumour Father's telephone call and my enquiries at the police stations in the area were, naturally, nothing but stage-acting on our part

Reference has already been made to uncle's correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his escape from India at pages 201 & 202. After uncle's departure from Calcutta, Mr. Mukundalal Sircar, Acting General Secretary of the Forward Bloc, sent a telegram to the Mahatma on the 26th January, 1941, requesting his reply to uncle's letter of the 10th. Having learnt from the Mahatma that he did not receive uncle's letter of the 10th January, 1941, Mr Sircar sent a copy thereof, which elicited the following reply dated the 16th February, 1941, from Mahatma Gandhi : "I had to delay replying to you because I got your copy of Subhas Babu's letter first and then his own letter. The differences in our case are vital and fundamental Subhas Babu knows them and I expect you too know them. Independence secured through violence would have contents different from that secured through non-violent means." To Mahatma Gandhi's letter, Mr. Sircar replied : "Though I consider the correspondence on this subject as closed, I feel constrained to say that the sentence in your letter with particular reference to violent and non-violent means, in my opinion, does not arise and is not relevant to the point of clarification sought for by Subhas Babu because he is

a Congressman and the Forward Blocists are Congressmen as well."[1]

While uncle had reached Europe after his dramatic escape from India after a tremendously hazardous journey through Afganistan, it would be interesting to know what our leaders in India were doing at the time to advance the cause of independence, Mahatma Gandhi had launched his individual civil disobedience movement, but it lacked the enthusiasm which was evident during the previous movements. The Mahatma had probably calculated that by following a mild policy, he would ultimately succeed in keeping the door open for a compromise with the British Government.

The movement caused little difficulty to the Government in exploiting India for war purposes and in this they were aided by such agents as the eistwhile Communist leaders, the late M N Roy, and later on by the Communist Party of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who had never in his own life had the courage to do anything in opposition to the Mahatma and who had been using his influence in order to prevent the Congress from embarrassing the British Government while the war was on, also joined the individual civil disobedience movement as a Satyagrahi In this connection, the interview[2] Mr R S. Ruikar, President, Madhya Pradesh Forward Bloc and Mr Mukundalal Sircar had with Mahatma Gandhi on the 30th March, 1941, at Sevagram near Wardah was most revealing.

In the course of the interview, Mahatma Gandhi told Messrs. Ruikar and Sircar that the real emblem of non-violence was the Charkha which Mr Subhas Bose ridiculed When Mr Ruikar asked the Mahatma whether Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad believed in that em-

[1]The entire correspondence was published in *Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta, dated the 22nd February, 1941

[2]An account of the interview was published in *Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta, on the 2nd April, 1941

blem, the Mahatma replied, "But Pandit Jawaharlal has agreed to abide by all the conditions imposed by me It was only when he agreed and conveyed his acceptance that I allowed him to be the second Satyagrahi. [Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the first Satyagrahi] Even now he sends reports from jail that he is regularly spinning and has therefore faith in the Charkha, so far at least as the present struggle is concerned"

From Europe uncle maintained contacts with father in India through the Italian Consulate, and after Italy's entry into war through the Consul-General of Japan in Calcutta

Early in December, 1941, the Congress leaders belonging to the Gandhi Wing, who had been imprisoned in connection with the individual Civil Disobedience movement were released from jail, but simultaneously leaders belonging to the Left Wing including father were clapped in prison Father was arrested under the Defence of India Rules on the 11th December, the day following Japan's declaration of war on the United States of America and Britain The Government of India issued the following statement on father's arrest

> "The Government of India are satisfied that there have been contacts of such a nature between Mr Sarat Chandra Bose and the Japanese as to render his immediate apprehension necessary They have, therefore, issued orders for his detention under the Defence of India Rules and he was arrested in Calcutta on Thursday afternoon."

It has already been stated that contacts between uncle and father used to be maintained by means of messages transmitted in code from Germany to Japan and thence to Calcutta through the Consul-General of Japan in Calcutta The Consul-General of Japan used to meet father in secret at our country house at Rishra to convey uncle's messages to father and to carry father's messages in reply for onward transmission. Though the Consul-General used to be driven

in father's car to Rishra by Sisir after being picked up from predetermined points, it was apparent that father's movements used to be closely shadowed by the Police, specially after uncle's disappearance from Calcutta Besides, as mentioned earlier, one member of father's secretarial staff was suspected of having had secret links with the Police.

In March, 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India bringing with him a promise of Dominion Status after the war ended. Fortunately, the Cripps proposals were rejected by the Congress on the ground that they in no way met India's demand for freedom. After the failure of Cripps' mission and in spite of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's propaganda that even without a compromise with Britain, India should nevertheless fight shoulder to shoulder with her against Fascism, the Congress Working Committee finally passed the famous "Quit India" resolution on the 14th July, 1942, declaring that "Britain's rule in India must end immediately."

Early in March, 1942, the whole of India was electrified on hearing uncle's voice over the Azad Hind Radio from "somewhere in Europe." He broadcast in Hindi, Bengali, and English From then on, the Azad Hind Radio was in the air every evening till about the end of the war in Europe and uncle himself broadcast at regular intervals.

The "Quit India" resolution was ratified by the All India Congress Committee on the 8th August, 1942, and signal for starting mass civil disobedience movement all over the country was given The British Government of India had already made necessary preparations to strike a heavy blow at the Congress and were not slow to act On the 9th August, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi and the entire Working Committee were arrested Thus, before the movement could get into its stride, all the principal leaders including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who in the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*

* *India from Curzon to Nehru and after*—by Durga Das, P. 202.

happened to be "our Englishman" were put in jail and thus rendered inactive. The movement though it started on a big scale, ultimately came to a grinding halt within a few weeks more, due to lack of adequate preparation and leadership, than want of enthusiasm on the part of the people

The first phase of large-scale disobedience of law and sabotage was suppressed by the end of August itself. I remember that railway communications between Dhanbad and Calcutta and between Dhanbad and Patna remained cut off for only three days and when these were restored, they remained intact from then onwards. Also, there was no disruption of tele-communications in that area. The second phase of local and isolated movements was virtually over by the end of the year. The fight for India's freedom was now to take place outside India, and according to the noted British historian, Michael Edwardes,* "The actions of one man [meaning uncle] were to have profound effect upon the future"

Towards the end of 1942, uncle's voice was not heard over the Azad Hind Radio for several months and then it suddenly burst over that of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind from Syonan (or Singapore) In February, 1943, uncle again took the plunge into the unknown—his second historic journey, with death staring him in the face every minute of that journey. He left Kiel (in Germany) in a submarine bound for the Indian ocean. After nearly three months' journey and having missed death several times by inches, the boat reached a pre-destined point in the Indian ocean near Madagascar where a Japanese submarine waited to take him to Penang in Malaya Peninsula The latter surfaced in Penang early in June, 1943, and discharged its distinguished passenger. From Penang uncle took the plane to Tokyo. The scene thereafter shifted to Singapore where

* *The Last Years of British India*—by Michael Edwardes, P. 96

he formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, and of which he was proclaimed the head, the investiture having been performed by no less a person than that legendary figure and great revolutionary, the late Rashbehari Bose. The glorious exploits of the Indian National Army of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind now belong to history.

I will conclude these reminiscences by referring to attempts by uncle from South-East Asia at contacts with the family. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind sent out several batches of daring persons secretly to India in the year 1943 to organize resistance to the British Government and to prepare the ground for eventual entry of the Azad Hind forces into India. Some of these groups were landed on the east coast and others on the west coast of India from submarines. To one such group which landed on the west coast was assigned the task of establishing contact with our family in Woodburn Park and it carried a letter of introduction from uncle written by him in his own hand in the Bengali language from Syonan (Singapore) dated the 29th October, 1943. The letter, of course, was unsigned, but the manner and style of its composition bore the unmistakable stamp of uncle's personality. The letter had under uncle's own instructions to be destroyed after perusal by mother and us and committing the contents thereof to memory. Owing to brutal repressive measures adopted by the Police, it could not be preserved with anybody else. Many of the members of the squads who secretly landed in India either from submarine or by parachute from planes were ultimately captured by the British and they paid the supreme penalty for their patriotism. The leader of the squad who brought the above letter and his group, however, were able to disperse and go underground in the nick of time and were thus able to evade arrest.

Subsequently, another memo was received from uncle on the letter-head of the Provisional Government of Azad

Hind written from the Indo-Burma frontier, but this was received only after the end of the war. As per uncle's instructions, it was delivered to Sisir in Calcutta, and has been preserved by him. Datewise this was the last written note we had received from uncle, as uncle's letter to father written on the eve of his perilous journey by submarine from Germany on the 8th February, 1943, was received by father only after the termination of the Second World War This letter written in Bengali had been deposited by uncle with aunt (the former Miss Emilie Schenkl) with instructions to preserve it carefully and hand it over to father herself personally. A photocopy of the letter was sent to father from Europe in 1947 by a special messenger, but the letter in original was handed over by aunt personally to father when he visited Vienna in 1948. Uncle had informed father by means of that letter of his marriage to Miss Schenkl and of the birth of his daughter (Anita). In fact, one of the main objects of my parents' visit to Europe in 1948 was to see uncle's letter in original, and to meet aunt and my little cousin-sister, Anita, as they had not had the opportunity of meeting them before

My parents met them again during their next visit to Europe in 1949. As father was not able to go to Vienna in 1949 on account of the medical treatment he was then undergoing in Glion in Switzerland, aunt and Anita were asked to come over to Switzerland and spend about two weeks with him and mother. As I happened to accompany parents to Europe that year, I too, was able to meet her again after a lapse of about fourteen years—this time as my aunt—and my little cousin-sister, Anita, of course, for the first time Father desired aunt and Anita to come over to and live in India, but as their visit to and stay in India involved sorting out several knotty problems, he could not ask them to come to India immediately. It was arranged that on his return home, father would finalize the necessary arrangements and discuss them with aunt when he visited Europe again early

in the year following Unfortunately, father fell seriously ill soon after his return from Europe towards the middle of 1949 and was not able to proceed with the necessary arrangements

I know he was very keen on finalizing them on his return to India after his visit to Europe in 1949 as soon as he was a little better. In fact, father intended to build a separate house on his property in 38/2, Elgin Road for her residence. But that was not to be There was a relapse of father's illness and he was completely bed-ridden soon after his return from Europe in 1949 and he passed away in February, 1950. He had intended to publish uncle's letter announcing his marriage after finalizing all arrangements for aunt's visit to India After father's death, my mother published uncle's letter of the 8th February, 1943, to father in the Indian press giving an account of father's desire for bringing aunt and Anita over to India

My aunt who joined uncle in Germany in April, 1941, immediately on his arrival there after his historic escape from India, again assisted him in the preparation of his account of the Indian struggle, during the period 1935-1942. The manuscript thereof which had been meticulously preserved by aunt through the vicissitudes of fortune of the Second World War were handed over to father and this was finally printed and published in India in 1952.

In spite of his marriage and birth of a child, when the call of the country went forth in the form of an appeal from the Indians in South-East Asia, headed by that great patriot, the late Rashbehari Bose, and his presence there became imperative to organize and lead the Indian National Army in striking the decisive blow at the British in India, no family ties, however great, could hold back uncle from his historic mission. Liberation of India was to him an all-consuming passion for which he was prepared to sacrifice and did sacrifice all including his own family, as Lord Buddha had done more than two thousand years ago in search of spiritual salvation.

Epilogue

The "Quit India" movement in India was suppressed by the British Government within a few weeks after it was launched. The topmost Congress leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, were arrested on the morrow of the session of the All-India Congress Committee, which adopted the resolution calling upon the British to quit, and rendered inactive from 9th August, 1942, till their release by 1945. From 1943 onwards, there was nothing to fire the imagination of the Indian people except news of military disasters to the British arms, impassioned and electrifying broadcasts by uncle over the Azad Hind radio stations in the Far-East, and the glorious activities and exploits of the Indian National Army and its Netaji. Excitement rose to fever pitch when the news of entry of the Indian National Army into India—in Kohima—and planting on the soil of India of the Indian national flag were broadcast over the Azad Hind Radio. The news of occupation of the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the Bay of Bengal by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and their re-naming as Saheed and Swaraj Dweep respectively led to further intensification of patriotic feeling in India.

From the beginning of the year 1945, the tide of the war in South-East Asia began to turn and culminated in the retreat of the Indian National Army from the Indian soil and the departure of uncle from the Burmese front for an unknown destination. None of us, not even father, heard of or from him, thereafter.

After the termination of the war, the British, however, decided to quit the Indian sub-continent, but only after dividing the country into India and Pakistan and thus in August, 1947, independence dawned on India not due to the short-lived and unsuccessful movement in 1942 or due to the socalled 'Soul force' exerted on the British, but to other factors of much graver importance. This view is corroborated by facts presented by Michael Edwardes[1] who observed :

> "In the middle of January, 1946, the British authorities, who had always feared the possibility of revolt in their Indian units, were shocked by a mutiny amongst the British. The ground and maintenance units at Dum Dum airport near Calcutta and other RAF stations in India and the Middle East mutinied over delays in repatriation and demobilisation. . . The Royal Indian Air Force, imitating the RAF, also became insubordinate and even went so far as to declare its sympathy with the INA . . . The Navy also mutinied at Calcutta and Madras, and rather more seriously at Karachi."

In an arresting passage[2] in the same book in the chapter entitled, 'Dramatis Personae', Edwardes remarked :

> "It slowly dawned upon the Government of India that the backbone of British rule, the Indian Army, might now no longer be trustworthy. The ghost of Subhas Bose, like Hamlet's father, walked the battlements of the Red Fort, and his suddenly amplified figure over-awed the conferences that were to lead to independence."

The great historian, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, has analyzed all factors leading to independence at great length in his article, "Gandhiji's role in India's struggle for freedom"[3], and according to his considered opinion, "it was the I N.A. that proved to be the decisive factor" in the ultimate transfer of power.

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1) In his book, *The Last Years of British India*—P 125 (Published by the New English Library, 1967)
2) Ibid, P 105
3) Published in *Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta, dated the 26th January, 1961.

It was, of course, not politic for the British to declare the real reasons behind transfer of power to India or, for that matter to Pakistan. They, therefore, inspired the creation of such myths as 'Revolution by consent', etc , and thereby sought to draw a veil over Netaji and the activities of the Indian National Army. The Indian leaders who took over from the British made common cause with the latter and saw to it that Netaji's name and activities were not merely played down but effectively blacked out so that their names may go down in history as the architects of Indian freedom and creators of new India For more than twenty-five years now, we in India have been fed on tendentious, distorted, and even lop-sided official history, smacking unfortunately of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, but real and true history has a way of remorselessly asserting itself in the end. There are unmistakable signs that this process of unfolding of history has now started. Confirmation thereof is provided by the latest volume of documents on the last days of British rule[1] and the new light shed on the role of the then Indian leaders based on the papers of the last Viceroy of India.[2]

1) *The Transfer of Power 1942-7, Vol VI The Post-war Phase*, HMSO London; British High Commission, New Delhi.

2) *Freedom at Midnight*, Collins & Lapierre, Vikas Publishing House New Delhi, 1976

APPENDIX I

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

Training of Students in Foreign Countries

SJ. SUBHAS BOSE'S PLEA FOR CONDITIONAL TRADE PACT

KARLSBAD (By Air Mail)

In the following letter addressed to the "United Press", Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose offers his suggestions as regards practical training abroad for Indian students and deals with the question of bilateral trade agreements .

Since the last war a large number of Indian students have been coming to Europe—and especially Germany—for post-graduate studies and practical training in factories. While the British factories have been raising all sorts of objections in receiving Indian apprentices, the German factories, until quite recently, have been welcoming them with open arms. A large number of Indians have accordingly been trained in German Universities and factories since 1920 and they have gone back home to popularise Germany in our country. Unfortunately the advent of the new regime in Germany has slowly brought about a change for the worse so far as Indian students are concerned. When I visited Germany for the first time in 1933, complaints were brought to my notice that Indians were finding it difficult to find admission in German factories These complaints have been increasing in number with the lapse of time. I shall give a few typical instances.

FACTORIES CLOSED TO INDIANS

An Indian student who has taken his doctorate in a German University with Pharmaceutical Chemistry as one of his principal subjects, finds it impossible to get into a German factory for practical training. Another student

who has taken his doctorate in a German University in Industrial Chemistry, has been unable to secure admission into a German factory for learning coal-tar distillation. Another promising student who is completing his course in Engineering has been refused practical training by all the big factories including Siemens and Halske. Another student of Engineering who wants to get training in a textile mill in spinning has been refused admission everywhere and has ultimately been offered admission by a Polish textile factory in Lodz.

I now ask the leaders of the Indian people and of Indian Industry, if we are to accept the above worsening situation with folded hands or try to remedy the present state of affairs. I am giving my own opinion in the light of what other countries have been doing under similar circumstances.

At the outset I must say that at the present moment, German factories have not the freedom to admit foreign students as apprentices at their own discretion. Every case has to be sent up for decision by a Board appointed by the German Government of which Dr. Schacht is the President

Countries like Turkey, China, Persia, etc, when they place any substantial orders with foreign firms, always make it a condition that a certain number of their nationals must be trained in those factories This condition is invariably accepted by foreign firms, including the German. India, however, is the only country in the world which buys substantially from abroad but imposes no conditions. For this state of things, both the Indian Government and the Indian leaders are responsible.

SUGGESTED REMEDY

The question now arises, what is the remedy ? I shall suggest some alternative remedies which are practicable. In the first place, members of the Legislative Assembly should ask the Government of India to approach the Governments of all the countries from which India buys substantially to give facilities for practical training to Indian students If this move fails or if the Government of India refuses to act,

the Indian Chamber of Commerce should make a direct representation to the Chambers of Commerce in all such countries to the same effect. If this step is not taken or if it proves ineffective when taken, the Indian National Congress should make a representation in all such countries through its own representative (or representatives). If this step also is not taken or if it proves ineffective all Indian industrialists who place orders abroad, should see to it that when they place any orders with foreign firms they make a condition that a certain number of Indians should be trained in those factories

The most effective course is for the Government of India to act. But will they act ? Let our Assembly representatives try. If they fail, it does not matter. I know from personal experience that in all these Continental countries, the Chamber of Commerce wields great influence over the Government and over the industries as well. If the Chamber of Commerce of a particular country is approached by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in a serious manner, they are bound to respond—if not out of sympathy, at least out of fear that they may lose their trade with India. Therefore, if the move taken by the Assembly fails, the Indian Chamber of Commerce should take up the question.

What Congress can do

A third alternative is for the Indian National Congress to take up this matter. I know from personal experience that in many countries, the Congress enjoys great prestige and people realise that it represents the future Government of India. Consequently, if a representation is made by the Congress, it is bound to have a favourable effect in many countries. They know that the Congress is in a position to declare boycott of goods coming from countries where Indians are not treated properly.

Lastly, individual industrialists, when they buy machinery in any country can insist that a certain number of Indian students should be trained in their factories. I know a few

Indian students who have been able to secure admission into continental factories through the patriotic help of some Indian industrialists who have made a strong demand to that effect. I also know of some Indian industrial magnates of the front rank who were in a position to help Indian students in this manner but who refused to do so. And the self-same industrial magnates want us to buy their goods on patriotic grounds when they manufacture them

It is possible and desirable to try all the above four remedies simultaneously The position of Indian students seeking practical training in Germany is becoming more and more difficult every day and immediate steps are necessary.

Openings in other Countries

Ever since I realised the coming difficulty in Germany in 1933, I have been trying to develop contacts in other countries, so that if Germany ultimately shuts her doors on Indian apprentices, they may not be stranded altogether I am glad to say that there are openings for Indians in other countries and these could be developed further, if we work with a definite plan and purpose. Czechoslovakian firms like Skoda will gladly welcome Indian apprentices Italian firms like Marelli and Pirelli offer similar facilities Polish textile factories in Lodz can also be of help. It goes without saying, of course, that we shall have to transfer our patronage to these countries that offer facilities to our young men in matter of practical training.

Bilateral Trade Agreement

It will be admitted on all hands that for the industrial development of India we need not only capital, and State-aid but also technical experts. Capital, Labour and State-aid will be forthcoming without much difficulty—the moment we have political power. But the training of experts takes a long period of time. The experience of Russia since 1917 teaches us that we should turn our serious attention to this problem from today—if we want to avoid surrendering

helplessly to foreign experts. When the Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement was being negotiated in Delhi, there was a stipulation about the purchase of our raw cotton by Japan—but there was not a word about the training of our apprentices in Japanese textile factories.

This brings us to the question of bilateral trade agreements. It is high time that we had entered into bilateral trade agreements with countries like Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, U.S.A., following the example of the Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement. Such agreements are absolutely necessary for our economic regeneration and for maintaining a proper trade balance. Why should countries like Germany sell to India much more than they buy from her On the contrary, why should we buy so little from countries like Czechoslovakia that buy so much from us.

Besides entering into Trade Agreements with individual countries, it is necessary for our businessmen to come into close contact with businessmen in other countries. This object is fulfilled in other countries by establishing mixed organisation and mixed Chambers of Commerce. Thus if we want to develop closer contact with Czechoslovakia, we should establish in India an Indo-Czechoslovakian Society and an Indo-Czechoslovakian Chamber of Commerce. There should be similar organisations for other countries in which we are interested Organisations have already been started on these lines in Prague, Vienna and Rome. It is necessary that there should be corresponding organisations in India for developing contact with these countries and that there should also be mixed Chambers of Commerce in India and in European countries —"*United Press*".

Reproduced from *Farward* dated August 25, 1935.

APPENDIX II

FOR EVER TO STAND WITH OPPRESSED WORKERS

Romain Rolland's Latest Thoughts

A FASCINATING CONVERSATION WITH THE GREAT THOUGHT-LEADER

By

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

Wednesday, the 3rd April, 1935.

It was a bright sunny morning and Geneva was looking at its best. In the distance, silhouetted against the clear blue sky, stood the snow-capped heights of Saleve In front of us there lay the picturesque lake of Geneva with the stately buildings mirrored in its glassy bosom I was out on a pilgrimage Ever since I had landed in Europe, two years ago, I had been longing to meet that great man and thinker —that great friend of India and of India's culture—Mon Romain Rolland. Circumstances had prevented our meeting in 1933 and again in 1934 but the third attempt was going to succeed. I was in high spirits, but occasionally a thrill of anxiety and doubt passed within me Would I be inspired by this man or would I return disappointed ? Would this great dreamer and idealist appreciate the hard facts of life—the practical difficulties that beset the path of the fighter in every age and clime ? Above all, would he read what fate had written on the walls of India's history ?

INSPIRING WORDS

What heartened me, however, were the inspiring words in his letter of the 22nd February, "But we men of thought must each of us fight against the temptation that befalls us in moments of fatigue and unsettledness, of repairing to a world beyond the battle called either God or Art or Freedom

of the Spirit or those distant regions of the mystic soul. For fight we must, as our duty lies on this side of the ocean—on the battle-ground of men."

For full two hours we drove along the circuitous route which skirts the lake of Geneva. It was charming weather and while we raced along the Swiss Riviera we enjoyed one of the finest sceneries in Switzerland As we came to Villeneuve, the car slowed down and ultimately came to a standstill in front of Villa Olga, the residence of the French savant. That was indeed a beauty spot Sheltered by an encircling row of hills, the house commanded a magnificent view of the lake. All around us there was peace, beauty and grandeur. It was indeed a fit place for a hermitage.

BURDENED WITH SORROWS OF HUMANITY

As I rang the bell, the door was opened by a lady of short stature but with an exceedingly sympathetic and lively face. This was Madame Romain Rolland. Hardly had she greeted me than another door opened in front of us and there emerged a tall figure with a pale countenance and with wonderful penetrating eyes. Yes this was the face I had seen in many a picture before—a face that seemed to be burdened with the sorrows of humanity. There was something exquisitely sad in that pallid face—but it was not an expression of defeatism For no sooner did he begin to speak than colour rushed to his white cheeks—the eyes glowed with a light that was uncommon—and the words that he poured forth were pregnant with life and hope.

INDIAN SITUATION

The usual greetings and the preliminary enquiries about India and Indian friends were soon over and we dropped into a serious conversation Mon. Rolland could not—or did not—speak English and I could not speak French. So we had as interpreters Mademoiselle Rolland and Madame Rolland. My purpose was to discuss with him the latest developments in the Indian situation and to ascertain his

present views on the important problems before the world. I had therefore to do much of the talking at first in order to explain the Indian situation as I analysed and comprehended it. The two cardinal principles on which the movement of the last 14 years had been based were—firstly, Satyagraha or non-violent resistance and secondly, a united front of all sections of the Indian people, e g. capital and labour and landlord and peasant. India's great hope was that the Satyagraha movement would fructify in a peaceful settlement in the following manner. Within India the movement would gradually paralyse the civil administration of the country. Outside India, the lofty ethics of Satyagraha would stir the conscience of the British people. Thus would the conflict lead to a settlement whereby India would win her freedom without striking a blow and without shedding any blood. But that hope was frustrated. Within India, the Satyagraha movement no doubt created a non-violent revolution but the higher services, both civil and military, remained unaffected and the "King's Government" therefore went on much as usual. Outside India, a handful of high-minded Britishers were no doubt inspired by the ethics of Gandhi but the British people as a whole remained quite indifferent: self-interest drowned the ethical appeal

The failure to win freedom led to a very earnest heart searching among the rank and file of the Indian National Congress. One section of Congressmen went back to the old policy of constitutional action within the Legislatures Mahatma Gandhi and his orthodox followers, after the suspension of the civil disobedience movement (or Satyagraha) turned to a programme of social and economic uplift of the villages. But the more radical section, in their disappointment inclined to a new ideology and plan of action and the majority of them combined to form the Congress Socialist Party.

Pained at the failure of Satyagraha

"What would be Mon. Rolland's attitude," I asked at

the end of my lengthy preface, "if the united front is broken up and a new movement is started not quite in keeping with the requirements of Gandhian Satyagraha ?"

He would be very sorry and disappointed, said Mon. Rolland, if Gandhi's Satyagraha failed to win freedom for India. At the end of the Great War, when the whole world was sick of bloody strife and hatred, a new light had dawned on the horizon when Gandhi emerged with his new weapon of political strife Great were the hopes that Gandhi had roused throughout the whole world.

"We find from experience", said I, "that Gandhi's method is too lofty for this materialistic world and, as a political leader, he is too straightforward in his dealings with his opponents. If Satyagraha ultimately fails, would Mon. Rolland like to see the national endeavour continued by other methods or would he cease taking interest in the Indian movement ?"

"The struggle must go on in any case"—was the emphatic reply.

"But I know several European friends of India who have told me distinctly that their interest in the Indian freedom movement is due entirely to Gandhi's method of non-violent resistance."

Hard Facts of Life

Mon. Rolland did not agree with them at all. He would be sorry, if Satyagraha failed. But if it really did, then the hard facts of life would have to be faced and he would like to see the movement conducted on other lines

That was the answer nearest to my heart. Here then was an idealist, who did not build castles in the air but who had his feet planted on terra firma.

He found it difficult to express a definite opinion because he was not aware of all the facts of the Indian situation.

Stand on Economic Issues

"What would be Mon. Rolland's attitude," I continued,

"if the united front policy of the Indian National Congress fails to win freedom for India and a radical party emerges which identifies itself with the interests of the peasants and the workers ?"

Mon. Rolland was clearly of opinion that the time had come for the Congress to take a definite stand on the economic issues. "I have already written to Gandhi," said he, "that he should make up his mind on this question."

Explaining his attitude in the event of a schism within the Indian National Congress he continued, "I am not interested in choosing between two political parties or between two generations. What is of interest and of value to me is a higher question. To me, political parties do not count What really counts is the great cause that transcends them—the cause of the workers of the world. To be more explicit, if as a result of unfortunate circumstances, Gandhi (or any party, for the matter of that) should be in conflict with the cause of the workers and with their necessary evolution towards a socialistic organization —if Gandhi (or any party) should turn away and stand aloof from the workers' cause, then for ever will I side with the oppressed workers—for ever will I participate in their efforts because on their side is justice and the law of the real and necessary development of human society."

I was delighted and amazed. Even in my most optimistic moods I had never expected this great thinker to come out so openly and boldly in support of the workers' cause.

The strain resulting from our animated conversation was great and I felt anxious for the delicate health of my host However, a relief came when tea was announced and we all moved into the adjoining room.

Over cups of tea our conversation went on uninterrupted. Many were the problems that we rushed through in our two and a half hours' discussion. Mon. Rolland was greatly interested in the Congress Socialist Party and its composition. His concern for the continued incarceration of Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru and other politicals was profound. His interest in all the actions, speeches and writings of the Mahatma was astonishing For instance, he pulled out from his old files, a statement of the Mahatma in which he had expressed his sympathy for socialism We talked at length of Mahatma Gandhi and his tactics I ventured the remark that the Mahatma would not take a definite stand on the economic issues. Whether on political or social or economic questions he was temperamentally a believer in 'the golden mean.' I then referred to what the younger generation regarded as some of the defects in his leadership and tactics, namely, his incorrigible habit of putting all his cards on the table, his opposition to the policy of social boycott of political opponents, his hope of a change of heart on the part of the British Government, etc. It did not afford us any satisfaction, I said, to oppose him or even criticize him—when he had done more for his country than anyone else in recent history and had raised India considerably in the estimation of the whole world. But we loved our country more than any personality

INTERNATIONALISM

I asked Mon Rolland if he would be good enough to put in a nutshell the main principles for which he had stood and fought all his life. "Those fundamental principles," he said, "are (1) Internationalism (including equal rights for all races without distinction), (2) Justice for the exploited workers—implying thereby that we should fight for a society in which there will be no exploiters and no exploited—but all will be workers for the entire community, (3) Freedom for all suppressed nationalities and (4) Equal rights for women as for men." And he proceeded to amplify some of these points.

As our conversation was drawing to a close, I remarked that the views he had expressed that afternoon, would cause surprise in many quarters, since they appeared to be a recent development in his thought-life. This remark worked like

an electric button and set in motion a whole train of thought. Mon. Rolland spoke of the acute mental agony he had passed through since the end of the War in trying to revise his social ideas and his entire ideology.

HIS LATEST THOUGHTS

"This combat within myself," he said, "extended over a very wide field " Continuing he said, "The primary objective of all our endeavours should be the establishment of another social order more just and more human. If we do not do so, it will mean the end of society." Then referring to the methods of activity he said: "My own task has been for several years to try and unite the forces against the old order that is enslaving and exploiting humanity. This has been my role in the World's Congress of all political parties against War and Fascism, which was held in Amsterdam in 1932 and in the permanent Committees appointed by that Congress. I still believe that there is in non-violence a strong though latent revolutionary power which can and ought to be used

I interrupted him at this stage to ask him how the world at large could know of his present ideas. To this he replied: "My social creed of these fifteen years has been expounded in two volumes of articles which have been just published. In the first one "Quinze ans de Combat" (Fifteen Years of Combat), Editions Rieder, Boulevard St. Germain 108, Paris VI—I have spoken of my inner fight and the evolution of my social ideas. In the second book "Par la Revolution La Paix" (By way of Revolution to Peace), Editions Socials Internationales, 24, Rue Racini, Paris VI, I have dealt with questions concerning war, peace, non-violence, and the coordination of their efforts in fighting the old social order." Continuing he said that some of his friends had refused to recognize all that he had written, preferring to accept only those portions with which they agreed. These two volumes would, however, be a faithful record of the evolution of his thought.

GREATEST DISASTER FOR EUROPE

Our conversation did not end without a discussion of the much apprehended and much-talked-of war in Europe. “For suppressed peoples and nationalities,” I remarked, “war is not an unmixed evil” But for Europe war will be the greatest disaster,” said he : “It may even mean the end of civilization. And for Russia peace is absolutely necessary if she is to complete her programme of social reconstruction.”

Before I took leave of my host, I expressed my deep gratitude for his kindness and my great satisfaction at what he had conveyed to me. I valued so greatly his sympathy for India and her cause that it had filled me with anxiety and fear whenever I had tried to imagine what his reaction would be towards the latest developments in the Indian situation.

The sun was still shining on the blue waters of the lake of Geneva as I emerged out of Villa Olga Around me there stood the snow-covered mountains The air was pregnant with joy and it infected me A heavy load had been lifted off my mind. I felt convinced that this great thinker and artist would stand for India and her freedom whatever might be her immediate future or her future line of action. And with that conviction I returned to Geneva a happy man.

Karlsbad,
2.7.1935.

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APPENDIX III

MY STRANGE ILLNESS

The 15th February, 1939.—After meeting Mahatma Gandhi at Shegaon and having a long talk with him, I returned to Wardha at about 6 p m At night some friends came to me and in the absence of anything urgent or important to do, we were having a chat I had begun to feel unwell, so I took my temperature in their presence It was 99.4 I did not take it seriously however.

The next morning, 16th February, I was to leave Wardha for Calcutta. In the morning instead of feeling fresh, I felt out of sorts. I thought that that was due to disturbed sleep the night before. At Wardha and Nagpur Stations, a large number of friends had come to see me and I had no time to think of myself. Only after the train steamed out of Nagpur Station did I realise that I was extremely unwell. When I took my temperature this time, it was 101. So I went straight to bed

After a couple of hours or so, an Anglo-Indian gentleman came into my compartment. I did not welcome his presence, particularly when I gathered that he would be travelling all the way to Calcutta—because I wanted to be left quite alone with my fever. But there was no help , he had as much right to be there as I had. After a while he looked intently at me and in a kindly tone, asked · "What is wrong with you ? You look completely washed out." I replied that I was not feeling well and that I had a temperature. Then he continued, "You are perspiring I see You must have got influenza."

The whole day and night I lay on my berth, perspiring all the time. Again and again I pondered over his words, 'You look completely washed out ' How could I look so bad as that ? My facial expression always was such that even after a prolonged illness I rarely 'looked' really bad.

Besides, how could a day's illness make me look pulled down to such a degree ? I was puzzled.

The next morning I got up with a determination to look fit I went into the bathroom, had a good wash and shave and came out looking somewhat better than the day before. My fellow-passenger sympathetically asked me how I was feeling and after hearing my reply, remarked, "Yes, you are looking better this morning Yesterday you were looking completely washed out "

From the station I went only to find that some friends were waiting to see me ; with some exertion I managed to carry on a conversation with them, but by 11 a m I felt so tired that I took leave of them and retired I had to go to bed—the bed I was destined to stick to for several weeks.

The doctor came in and after a thorough examination shook his head and took a serious view of the case. The pathologist was then sent for and he took specimens of blood, etc , for the usual tests Later, other doctors were brought in, including the First Physician to the Calcutta Medical College, Sir Nilratan Sircar, etc

While the doctors were feeling worried about the disease and were taxing their brains as to how best they could combat it, I was concerned more with my public engagements. On the 18th and 19th February, I had public engagements at Hajipur and Muzaffarpur in Bihar and on the 22nd February, the Working Committee of the Congress was to meet at Wardha. I reached Calcutta on the 17th February from Wardha and I was due to leave the same evening for Patna. Telegrams and telephone calls came in from Bihar enquiring if my previous programme was O.K , and I would adhere to it. I replied in the affirmative, adding that though I was unwell, I would come at any cost. I only wanted that they should cancel all processions and make my programme as light as possible. To my people at home I said that I would leave by the night train for Patna, en route to Hajipur, the same evening (17th February) notwithstanding what the doctors were saying, as I was determined to fulfil my engagements

on the 18th and 19th February. On being pressed to listen to medical advice I retorted that I would start even if I had a temperature of 105. Thereafter I gave instructions for my ticket to be purchased and berth reserved.

But as the hours rolled by, my temperature began to mount up and up. What was worse—a splitting headache got hold of me. And when the time came for me to start, though everything was ready, I could not lift my head To my great sorrow I had to humble myself and give up my determination Telegrams had to be sent regretfully that it was impossible for me to start that night, but that I would make every possible effort to start the following night. The next day my condition was no better, in fact it was worse. Moreover, all arrangements had been upset by my not leaving on the 17th So the Muzaffarpur tour had to be abandoned altogether. Nothing can describe my deep regret over this unexpected development.

Though Muzaffarpur was out of my programme after the 18th February, my mind was not at ease. I began to plan for the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee. Doctors began to give me repeated warnings that it was impossible to go to Wardha. If I gave up all thought of the Working Committee and concentrated my mind on getting well, I might be able to go to Tripuri Congress—otherwise, even Tripuri might have to be dropped But all these warnings were like speaking to a deaf person. My preparations went on despite medical advice, and thanks to friends, I had an aeroplane ready to take me to Nagpur on or about the 22nd February.

On the 21st, I slowly began to realise that the doctors were right and that it was quite impossible to go to Wardha either by train or by plane. I informed Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel by wire to that effect and suggested postponement of the Working Committee meeting till the Tripuri Congress. At that time I had not the faintest idea that twelve (or thirteen) members of the Working Committee would resign almost immediately

Much fuss has been made by interested parties over the above two telegrams and it has been alleged that I did not permit the Working Committee to transact even routine business Such an allegation is altogether unfounded. In the first place, there was nothing in the telegrams to indicate that I did not want the Working Committee to go through routine business My concern was over the draft resolutions for the Congress, which are usually framed by the Working Committee on the eve of its annual Plenary Session. In the second place, in my telegram to Sardar Patel, after giving my view regarding postponement, I requested him to ascertain the views of other members and wire same to me. The reply to my telegram was the resignation of twelve members of the Working Committee If these members had desired to frame the resolutions for the Tripuri Congress in my absence, I would certainly not have stood in their way. Regarding the transaction of business, if the other members of the Working Committee did not agree with me regarding postponement or if they were in doubt as to what my intentions were, they could very easily have put through a trunk-call or telegraphed to me To the transaction of routine business, there was not the slightest objection on my part And as to other and more important business, they would have found, if only they had enquired that there would have been no obstruction from my side if they had desired to carry on in my absence My only anxiety was to have such draft resolutions for the Congress prepared by the Working Committee as all the members would agree to—otherwise there was this danger that when the 'official' draft resolutions came up before the Subjects Committee, members of the Working Committee would be found arrayed on different sides. To obtain this unanimity, my presence was necessary when the draft resolutions were being prepared by the Working Committee. Hence I had suggested the postponement of the Working Committee meeting till the Tripuri Congress. My proposal would have worked very well indeed if twelve (or thirteen) members had not responded by throwing the bombshell of resignation.

The following telegram was sent by me to Sardar Patel on 21st February : "Sardar Patel, Wardha.

Kindly see my telegram to Mahatmaji. Regretfully feel Working Committee must be postponed till Congress. Please consult colleagues and wire opinion.

Subhas"

But I am sorry that I have digressed. This is not a 'political' article and when I began scribbling, I wanted to write about "My strange illness" and to explain why I called my illness "strange". I shall now continue my story

Till the evening of the 21st February I was hoping against hope that I would be able to attend the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee or at least fly there on the 22nd. But the doctors had no such worry For them, Wardha was out of the question—their eyes were on Tripuri. Their one effort was to pull me up to such a condition—during the next few days that I could at least undertake the journey to the Tripuri Congress. Sir Nilratan Sircar's bulletin had banned even the Tripuri Congress, but I pleaded and argued with my doctors and ultimately told them plainly that so long as I was alive, I could not keep away from the Tripuri Congress during such a crisis in our history. I gratefully confess that they did all that was humanly possible for them to enable me to attend the Congress.

As I look back on my five weeks' illness, I must make one confession. From the beginning, I did not take my illness as seriously as the doctors did—in fact I thought that they were unduly alarmist—and I did not co-operate with them as much as I should have. On the other hand, I have a legitimate excuse to offer. It was quite impossible for me to take complete physical and moral rest I feel it, at a most critical period the resignation of the members of the Working Committee aggravated the crisis. Statement after statement was being issued attacking me. The 'unkindest' cuts came from a quarter where they were least expected. The General

Secretary of the Congress having resigned, I had perforce to attend to urgent business sent in by the office of the All-India Congress Committee Regarding interviews, while I could decline to see local friends and visitors, I could not very well refuse to see Congressmen coming to see the Congress President on Congress business from far-off places. Owing to these and other factors, even with the best will in the world, I could not have complied with the advice of my doctors regarding physical and mental rest. I shall give one relevant instance here, when statement after statement was being issued against me, my silence was being misconstrued and friends in different and even remote provinces, began to urge me to issue some sort of a reply in order to meet at least some of the unfounded charges involved against me. After a great deal of procrastination due to my ill-health, I made up my mind one afternoon to write my statement that day—come what may. It was not an easy affair, however I had first to wade through some of the statements that had appeared so far, in order to understand what the charges were Only after that I commenced dictating my statement. By the time I finished glancing through the typed copy and gave orders for issuing it to the press, it was midnight. Then the temperature was taken and it was 103. Prior to that there was an improvement in my general condition and the evening temperature was not rising beyond 101 for the last two days. The doctors, therefore, deplored the set-back was caused by my voluntarily undertaking mental work prematurely, but I could not help it, circumstanced as I was.

I must now come to the crux of my difficulties, because that will explain much of what has happened. When I was lying ill in Calcutta after my return from Wardha on the 17th February, it was widely propagated by interested people that my illness was a 'fake' and that my 'political' fever was being utilised for avoiding the meeting of the Congress Working Committee on the 22nd February. This news was communicated to me by friends from a number of provinces and

I cannot doubt its authenticity Even the bulletin issued by Sir Nilratan Sircar made no impression at all on the people who were consciously and maliciously carrying on the above false propaganda The same propaganda was carried on at Jubbalpore and Tripuri When I reached Jubbalpore on the 6th March at about 4 p m , my temperature was 101. When I reached my camp at Tripuri after an ambulance ride, it shot up to 103 On my arrival at Tripuri, the Reception Committee doctors took charge of me. After examining me, one of them looked significantly at the other and this struck me at once as strange. After a couple of days, I learnt the whole story Everybody in Tripuri had been told that I was not really ill and this propaganda had affected the doctors as well. When they examined me after my arrival and discovered that I was seriously ill, they were surprised and they then felt indignant about the false and malicious propaganda that had been carried on. What increased their indignation was that even their bulletins were not believed by interested people in Tripuri. For instance, an important ex-member of the Working Committee one day asked one of the Reception Committee doctors if I really had a temperature of 102 and if he (the Doctor) had taken the temperature himself. Reports came to me from several independent sources that in the highest circles, my illness was not believed in One day out of sheer exasperation, the Reception Committee doctors sent for a Medical Board, consisting of the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, C P. and Berar, the Director of Public Health, C.P. and Berar and the Civil Surgeon of Jubbalpore After their joint statement was issued, there was a change in the atmosphere. But the result of bringing in these big officials was that my attending the Open Session of the Congress was definitely banned I could have somehow coaxed and cajoled the Reception Committee doctors into allowing me to attend the Plenary Session of the Congress. But this was not possible with the officials Before issuing their report they were clever enough to ask me if I would trust their opinion and accept

their advice. Naturally, I had to reply in the affirmative and I was, as it were, trapped—for I was then told that I could not attend the Open Session of the Congress. The arrangements made by the Reception Committee for myself were quite satisfactory and from the physical point of view, I had nothing to complain of But owing to the above and other reasons, the moral atmosphere of Tripuri was sickening to a degree I have not experienced anything like it at any previous session of the Congress.

The letters, telegrams, etc. I have been receiving since the 17th February not only make interesting reading but when piled up make a regular volume. Every day they pour in—and not only do letters and telegrams come, but parcels and packets containing medicines of all kinds and amulets of every description I was trying to analyse the above writers and senders according to their religious faith and I found that every religious denomination was represented. And not only every religious denomination but every system of medicine (all the "pathies", if I may use that word) and both the sexes ! Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, etc.,—All opaths, Homeopaths, Vaids, Hakims, Natureopaths, Astrologers, etc.—men and women—all have been writing to me, giving me their advice and sometimes also sample of medicine and amulets. Naturally, it is quite impossible for me now to write and thank them for their kindness. Sometime, they wrote more than once when they did not get a reply from me. Now, what am I to do with all these prescriptions ? The first thing I do is to hand them over to my doctors,who can best judge how to utilize them. But in most cases, the doctors are reluctant to make any use of the prescriptions or the medicines sent. Is it ungracious on their part or on my my part ? I wonder.

Besides prescriptions and medicines, I have been receiving numbers of letters and parcels of a different sort. Astrologers and Sadhus send me amulets and blessings. And unknown well-wishers and sympathisers send me *ashirvadi* flowers, etc., after offering prayers for my health and welfare

at some temple or place of worship. According to prevailing custom these *ashirvadi* flowers, leaves, sacrificial ashes, etc., (or *nirmalya*) have to be received with reverence and placed on the head or against the forehead for a while But the fairer sex go even further They are reluctant to throw them away after this operation is over, with the result that any number of these packets and amulets can be found underneath my pillow. And they are daily growing in number Personally, I am of an exceedingly rationalistic frame of mind, but I respect the feelings and sentiments of others even where I do not agree with them

So I go on pondering within me as to the real value of these prescriptions, medicines, amulets, flowers, sacrificial ashes, etc. It moved me profoundly to find that they came from every section of vast Indian community and from every corner of India, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin It brought tears of gratitude to my eyes when I found that I had such a large circle of well-wishers and sympathisers. I had never imagined it even in my dreams It may be that a few of the writers wanted some sort of advertisement for themselves —but there is no doubt that the vast majority were actuated solely by a genuine feeling of sympathy for me in my sufferings. The prescriptions or medicines or amulets may have no objective value, but behind them all there was a genuine feeling of sympathy and affection which had for me unbounded value and deep significance. I have no doubt that these good wishes will help me greatly in my recovery much more than earthly medicines or astrological amulets. Even where I cannot make use of medical advice or medicine or amulets, I gratefully accept the good wishes that move the hearts of the senders.

Owing to the morally-sickening atmosphere of Tripuri, I left that place with such a loathing and disgust for politics as I have never felt before during the last nineteen years. As I tossed in my bed at Jamadoba, by day and by night, I began to ask myself again and again what would become of our public life when there was so much pettiness and vin-

dictiveness even in the highest circles. My thoughts naturally turned towards what was my first love in life—the eternal call of Himalayas. If such was the consummation of our politics—I asked myself—why did I stray from what Aurobindo Ghose would describe as "the life divine". Had the time now come for me to tear the Veil of Maya and go back to the fountain-head of all love ? I spent days and nights of moral doubt and uncertainty. At times the call of Himalayas became insistent. I prayed for light in my dark mind. Then slowly a new vision dawned on me and I began to recover my mental balance—as well as my faith in men and in my countrymen. After all, Tripuri was not India. There was another India revealed by these letters, prescriptions, medicines, amulets, flowers, etc What grievance could I have against that India—which was perhaps the real India ? Then again, it struck me that at Tripuri there were two worlds. The pettiness and vindictiveness that I had experienced, referred only to part of Tripuri. What about the other part ? What grievance could I have against that part ? Further, in spite of what I had experienced at Tripuri, how could I lose my fundamental faith in man ? To distrust man was to distrust the divinity in him—to distrust one's very existence. So, gradually all my doubts were dispelled till I once again recovered my normal robust optimism. In this effort to regain my normal self—these prescriptions, medicines, amulets, flowers, etc., were a great help

I have suffered a lot physically and have had experience of a large number of diseases. Sometimes I think I have exhausted the whole gamut described in text-books of Pathology I have fallen ill at home and abroad as well as in prison In fact, I often wonder that I am still alive and kicking. But in all my life I have not experienced such acute and concentrated physical suffering continuously for a month, as I have since the 17th February, 1939. True, I have suffered much in prison. But that suffering was spread out over comparatively long periods. What has happened to me this time ? I looked comparatively hale and hearty during the

first part of the last month Why and how did I suddenly fall so seriously ill ? Perhaps, doctors alone should attempt the answer, but cannot a layman—the patient—also try ?

Doctors have before them heaps of pathological test reports. They have, moreover, examined me repeatedly. Though they are not communicative to the patient as to the exact disease he has been suffering from, I gather that my present malady is some kind of pneumonia with perhaps liver and intestinal complications Blood-pressure—they add—is abnormally low. Moreover, power of resistance as revealed by sedimentation tests, etc., is also very low and weakness is excessive. The system lacks sufficient strength to combat infection and recover normality. Is this explanation sufficient and adequate ? I don't know.

Beyond the explanation that my vitality, for some reason or other is exceedingly low at present, I wonder if all the clinical and other forms of examination have revealed the real causes of this prolonged illness and this acute physical suffering. A few days after I fell ill, I began to receive letters and telegrams from different places suggesting the nature of my malady. Among them were some telegrams suggesting that I had been poisoned My doctors were amused at first. Then they gave thought to the matter but could not find any clinical data to support this theory, so they put it aside.

A few days later I was visited by a Professor of Calcutta University, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit Literature and a man of exemplary character; for whom our family have high regard and esteem. He had been commissioned to deliver a message to us. A number of Pandits and astrologers including himself had met day before to discuss my illness. They had come to the conclusion that ordinary causes could not account for my strange and acute illness. They were of the view that somebody in some part of the country had been practising what is known in the Tantra-Shastra as Marana-Kriya—that is, attempt to kill by tantric process or will-power. Everybody was intrigued and amused as well. Without disbelieving the possibility of exerting abnor-

mal will-power in accordance with Tantric mental exercises—was it possible in the year of grace 1939 for such mental phenomena as *Maran*, *Uchatan*, *Basheekaran*, etc. to take place ? Our visitor was definite that, though such phenomena were rare now, they did take place nevertheless. And he cited instances. He added that, though Marana-Kriya had taken place, owing to my strength, it would not have fatal result, but would only damage my health And he concluded by offering some advice as to how I should be careful in protecting my health.

I confess that all this did not convince me in the least, but it nevertheless left an uncanny feeling within me At the back of my mind there was the faint impression of a question mark. Another man talking in the above manner would have been dismissed with scant courtesy—but this gentleman of undoubted integrity, unimpeachable character and profound scholarship—who had nothing to do with politics and had no axe to grind—had to be listened to, even if he was not to be taken seriously

About this time—that is, a few days before I left for Tripuri—a number of friends began to press me to wear amulets in order to help me in recouping my health My rationalistic mind revolted against this at first, but in a moment of weakness, I yielded I accepted a couple of rings and four amulets. I accepted only those from friends whom I knew and who were not actuated by any professional motive. Amulets from people whom I did not know personally I did not wear and there were any number of them To wear all of them would be tantamount to converting myself into an amulet-exhibition. I was so anxious to be well during the Tripuri Congress that I argued within myself that even if there was a mere five per cent chance of my getting well by using amulets, why should I miss it ? So I compromised with my innate rationalism—but as soon as the Tripuri Congress was over, I relieved myself of the two rings and four amulets And now my rationalism is safe and I trust to nature and my luck

There are certain things about my illness which I at least as a layman cannot account for There is no regularity or periodicity. For some days the temperature would begin to rise at noon, reach its maximnm at about six p.m. and then slowly decline. Next morning it would be normal. Rise of temperature would be accompanied by unbearable headache which would subside only after four or five hours' continuous application of ice. Remission would be accompanied by heavy perspiration and complete prostration Then suddenly this order would change. Fever would persist day and night without any remission on the one side and high rise on the other. Sometimes the symptoms would point to malignant malaria, sometimes to enteric fever and sometimes to something else. But every time the pathological test would be negative. If one day the fever shot up to 104 degrees, the next day it would come down to normal and people would expect a permanent remission But the third day it would mount up again. The arbitrariness of the fever and the variety of symptoms would baffle both doctors and laymen. And the excessive weakness and exhaustion which have got hold of me remain a mystery. Even today I do not think I look half as bad as I really am.

During the last five weeks or more, though I have been cut off from the outside world to a large extent—in another sense I have been in close touch with it. People who have no connection whatsoever with politics, whom I do not personally know at all—people in remote corners of the country —even orthodox Pandits have shown such solicitude and sympathy for me in my illness that I could never imagine I have often asked myself—"What is the bond that binds us ? Why do they feel for me ? What have I done to merit such affection ?" An answer to these questions can be given by them alone.

One thing I know This is the India for which one toils and suffers. This is the India for which one can even lay down his life. This is the real India in which one can have undying faith, no matter what Tripuri says or does

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APPENDIX IV

EUROPEAN CRISIS

Analysis of The Debacle

By

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The recent European crisis has been studied and explained by different people from different points of view Herein the reader will find another such study

On the 19th January, 1938, I passed through Prague and had the honour of being received by Dr. Benes, then President of the Czechoslovakian Republic I had had the privilege of meeting him twice before, when he was the Foreign Minister under President Masaryk. President Benes during the course of a one-hour talk told me that never before had Czechoslovakia felt so safe and secure as then. By common consent, Dr. Benes is one of the cleverest statesmen in Europe but even he did not realise that he was sitting on a volcano Verily, the cleverest of us can sometimes err grievously The Czech Maginot Line and the newly developed air-force had lulled the President into a sense of security.

The next day I passed through Vienna. Everything was quiet then as in Austria generally. Schusnigg seemed to be safely installed as Chancellor and backed by the black-robed clergy and the black-shirted Fascists was ruling Austria without any difficulty Little did he know that within a few months, the Nazis were going to march into Austria and he was to be made a prisoner, like so many of the Austrian Socialists whom he had imprisoned.

BLUFF NOT CALLED

The Nazis had previously torn up the Treaty of Versailles and marched into the Rhineland to occupy it militarily. The French secret service had reported to the French Government

that Hitler's instructions to the Reichswehr (German Army) were that if the French Army invaded Germany, the Reichwehr were to fall back and avoid a war But Premier Blum had not the guts, to call Hitler's bluff

Austria's independence had been guaranteed by the big powers but when the Nazis invaded Austria and occupied it nobody had the courage to lodge a protest even In July 1934, Italy had threatened invasion, if the Germans entered Austria when Dolfuss was murdered—but in 1938, Italy was completely changed

Small wonder then that in a few months, not content with grabbing Austria, Germany wanted to annex the Sudetenland Once again Hitler thought that nobody would venture to call his bluff.

What made Hitler contemplate a fresh invasion ? He was assured that Italy would not object to it and that the big powers would not venture to fight him. Their armament programme was not ready particularly that of England. Now or never was therefore Hitler's motto.

BRITAIN'S SURRENDER

It is urged that Hitler was on the point of invading Czechoslovakia when Chamberlain rushed to meet him in an aeroplane. Was this projected invasion a make-believe or a reality ? If you ask me, I shall say that Germany would never have ventured into a war, knowing that Great Britain would be arrayed against her. Therefore, in my opinion, British politicians were either befooled by Hitler or they deliberately lent a helping hand to German hegemony over the continent. British surrender to Hitler meant the virtual substitution of the Anglo-German alliance in place of the Anglo-French alliance. The pro-French group in the Cabinet was overthrown by the pro-German group.

But why did France surrender to blackmail ? That is a question I find it difficult to answer. Since the Great War, there was French hegemony on the continent. That hegemony has disappeared overnight and France is now

a second class European power I did not think that French Imperialists would go down without fight. And the French Socialists ? Why did they agree to toe the line ? I am inclined to think that they have been suffering from an inferiority complex That is why they could not stand up to Hitler Blum was too much frightened at the prospect of war to be able to do the right thing

But France could have saved Czechoslovakia and at the same time prevented war If France had firmly told Britain and Germany that she would stand by Czechoslovakia, then Russia would have come in. And since the frontiers of Great Britain are now the Rhine, she would not have deserted France I am told by a friend who is just back from Europe that in Belgium all arrangements for a war were complete Thus the history of 1914 would have repeated itself I know sufficiently of Nazi Germany to be able to say that the Nazis would hve quailed before a situation similar to that of 1914

It is my considered opinion that a word from Britain to Germany to the effect that she could stand by France and Czechoslovakia would have sufficed to make Hitler give up all his plans for attacking Czechoslovakia

In the face of French and British betrayal, what could Czechoslovakia have done ? I have a feeling that had she withstood a German invasion, she might have dragged in France and Russia into the arena and ultimately Great Britain also. But this is after all a speculation Dr Benes had before his eyes the fate of Abyssinia Perhaps he thought it would have been better for the Negus as a practical politician, to have accepted the proposals of the Hoare-Laval Pact That is why he surrendered Sudetenland to Germany and kept what remained of his country after appeasing the Poles and the Hungarians.

What we have just witnessed is the first scene of a drama which will possibly end with a Four-Power Pact, the victory of France and the elimination of Soviet Russia from European politics. These, at any rate, are the plans of

Fascist politicians all over Europe Will they succeed ? Who can tell ?

One thing seems to be clear If Soviet Russia wants to stage a come-back, she will first have to convince the Big Powers that her war machine is as formidable as it was at the time the Franco-Soviet Pact was first broached by Laval.—*The Congress Socialist*

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